

MOIRA BLUMENTHAL PRODUCTIONS,
SHALOM AND MICHAEL SHUR PRESENT



STORIES

from the VIOLINS
of HOPE

Written by **Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum**
& **Ronda Spinak**

Musical curation by **Dr Noreen Green**
Artistic Director and Conductor of the
Los Angeles Jewish Symphony

31 May to 18 June 2023
Bondi Pavilion Theatre

THIS PRODUCTION IS SUPPORTED BY



www.moirablumenthalproductions.com.au

CAST

Barry French
Laurence Coy
Lloyd Allison-Young
Sophie Gregg
Kate Bookallil

MUSICIANS

Pianist
Dr Noreen Green
(performing on all dates EXCEPT 13 to 18 June)

Violinist
Ben Adler
(performing on all dates EXCEPT the 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11 June)

Swing Violinist
Leo Novikov

Swing Pianist
Ben Burton

CREATIVES

Director
Moira Blumenthal

Set Designer
Tom Bannerman

Costume Designer
Andrea Tan

Lighting Designer
Martin Kinnane

Sound Designer
Aaron Robuck

PRODUCTION

Production Manager
Helena Gonzalez

Stage Manager
Kirsty Walker

Rehearsal Stage Manager
Aaron Robuck



VIOLINS OF HOPE

Violins of Hope were all played by humble klezmers in Eastern Europe and by virtuosi of the finest orchestras. Famous violinists who've had close ties with the Violins of Hope include Pinchas Zukerman, Itzhak Perlman, Shlomo Mintz, Hagai Shaham, Daniel Hope, Niv Ashkenazi (who has

a Violin of Hope on permanent loan from the Weinstains, which he played in the original filmed version of the play) They have been played by The Berlin Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Israel Philharmonic, members of the Berlin Philharmonic and in concerts all over the world.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR, MOIRA BLUMENTHAL

Stories from the Violins of Hope began in September 2021, when friend and associate Judy Campbell sent me a YouTube presentation called the Violins of Hope.

I was intrigued at the concept that every violin has its own particular sound and that the music played on a violin by past owners are preserved as part of a violin's unique voice.

It was a thrilling idea that by restoring the voice of an instrument we were honoring previous owners.

The story of these Violins of Hope began when makers and repairers of stringed instruments, Moshe Weinstein, followed by his son Amnon Weinstein, received and repaired violins from Jews who refused to play German instruments at the outbreak of Hitler's atrocities. A collection of lost and damaged violins that had been played in forests, concentrations camps and villages grew to become the Violins of Hope.

To convert the YouTube presentation into a fully-fledged script the playwrights included the dramatic story of the Weinstains.

In 2022 we spent a week in Sydney working on an early draft with the writer Ronda Spinak, a group of actors, the dramaturg, Tim McGarry, and the second writer Lisa Rosenbaum on Zoom from LA.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Noreen Green from LA into our rehearsal room. Together with musicians Ben Adler, Ben Butler and Leo Novikov, Noreen worked with us to weave the wonderful musical score through the text.

Noreen also shared enlightening anecdotes and personal insights about the Violins of Hope and the Weinstein family. Invaluable help to our cast was a guided tour through the Sydney Jewish Museum by Michael Shur.

We all feel very privileged to be telling this story.

We hope you will be as amazed and as uplifted as we have been by this epic story about the power of music and of human passion and the resilience to create beauty and hope for the future.



THE VANDERVEEN AND THE FISHER VIOLINS

We are honoured to have two special violins for the performances. The Vanderveen violin from the Violins of Hope collection and the Fisher violin.

The Vanderveen violin, a Holocaust survivor, brought to Australia from the USA through the efforts of Dr Noreen Green and the Emanuel Fisher violin

that escaped the Holocaust to arrive in Sydney with his family in 1938.



A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF LOS ANGELES JEWISH SYMPHONY, DR. NOREEN GREEN

Stories from the Violins of Hope came about as a result of a fortuitous meeting with Gail Solo, a board member of The Braid and a lover of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. The collaboration of The Braid and the LAJS is a natural one, which champions our similar missions to preserve and advance Jewish art and culture through the spoken word and through music. It is so important to keep alive these compelling stories of the luthiers (violin makers), and also to recount how these instruments became a lifeline for some and a source of painful memories for others. As curator of the music, I consciously selected music that was previously composed, combining my knowledge of both Jewish and classical music to complement the scenes of the play. The survivors of the Shoah will not be here forever, but the violins will continue to tell their stories for generations to come. It's been a dream to collaborate with Ronda and her team, and I look forward to more opportunities.

Dr. Green is thrilled to be here in Australia for the world premiere of this next fully staged version of the Stories.



The Braid, Los Angeles, commissioned, developed, and produced the original play *Stories from Violins of Hope*, written by Lisa Rosenbaum, directed by Susan Morgenstern, developed and produced by RondaSpinak, with musical curation by Dr. Noreen Green and underwritten by Gail Solo.

With deepest gratitude to Amnon Weinstein and his extraordinary family for sharing their story.

The Braid would like to thank Sharon Landau, Managing Director of The Braid for her tireless efforts bringing the project to fruition. We are grateful to Stuart Downey and Yaron David for their legal assistance. The Braid and Weinstein family also thanks Susanne Reyto for her leadership with *Violins of Hope*, Los Angeles.

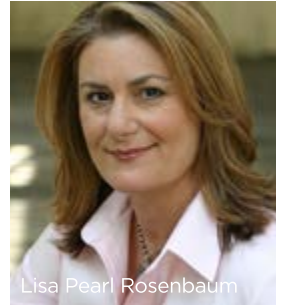
For more information please visit www.the-braid.org



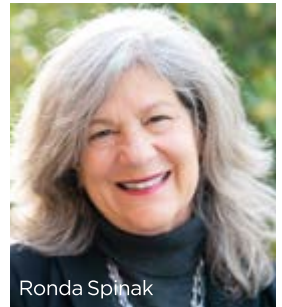
Moshe and Golda Weinstein,
parents of Amnon Weinstein

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHTS, LISA PEARL ROSENBAUM AND RONDA SPINAK

For us, the enormity of human talent lost in the Holocaust is among its most profound tragedies. The Braid, Los Angeles' award-winning Jewish theater company, is in some ways a response to that loss. We develop and produce inspiring Jewish stories for stage, in art and other programming, that highlight the values and diversity of the contemporary Jewish experience. As Founder and Artistic Director of The Braid, Ronda has adapted and produced hundreds of such stories for the repertoire. She felt the *Violins of Hope* story should be told in dramatic form and chose Lisa, Braid dramaturg and writer, to do so. As the daughter-in-law of Holocaust survivors and author of the novel *A Day of Small Beginnings*, set in the Eastern European world of this play, Lisa knew the territory and interviewed Amnon Weinstein at length. We are grateful for the opportunity to take Lisa's original videoed script, seen worldwide including at the UN, and transform it into a full theatrical production. It has been Lisa and Ronda's honor to delve more deeply into the Weinstein's powerful personal story and to celebrate the great gift they have given the world.



Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum



Ronda Spinak



Amnon Weinstein
in his workshop in Israel

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Ai Di Di Di Da

Hassidic Folk Tune

Chosen Kalle Mazel Tov

Traditional Jewish

Yedid Nefesh Ehud and Sara Zweig

Mazurka #43 Frédéric Chopin

Liebesleid (Love Sorrow)

Fritz Kreisler

La Scala di Seta Overture

Gioachino Rossini

Scherzo from A Midsummer

Night's Dream

Felix Mendelssohn

Shir Ha-Emek Marc Lavry

Vocalise Sergei Rachmaninoff

Siman Tov Traditional Jewish

Ha'amini Yom Yavo

Rafael Klatshkin

Chanson Triste Op 40 #2

Pyotr Tchaikowsky

Winter from The Four Seasons

Antonio Vivaldi

Zog Nit Keynmol/Partisan Song

Dmitry and Daniil Pokrass

Vi Ahin Zol Ich Geyn

Oskar Strock

Hora Mamtera Moshe Wilensky

Ani Ma'amim Holocaust Melody

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

W.A. Mozart

Kol Nidre

Traditional Hebrew Prayer

Badenweiler Marsch

Georg Fürst

Blue Danube Waltz

Johann Strauss

Minuet in G Major

Ignacy Paderewski

Gul Pembe

Traditional Turkish Song

Introduction and Rondo

Capriccioso

Camille Saint-Saëns

On Wings of Song

Felix Mendelssohn

Hora-Hatikvah

George Perlman



Celebrate the remarkable
stories of human resilience
and the struggle to
restore beauty
to the world.

This production of the *Stories from the Violins of Hope* would not have been possible without the support from the following.

Bergman Family
Foundation
Lionel Green
Testamentary Trust
Neill and Kathy Miller
Sandra and Barry
Smorgon Family
Foundation
Roth Families
B'nai B'rith
Charitable Trust
Shalom
Mervyn and Lorraine
Basserabie

Egon and Miriam
Sonnenschein
Jenny Michelson
Anna Johns
Lucille Segal
Ida Lichter and David
Constable
Ezekiel Solomon
Norbert and Sonja
Schweizer
Bev Michaelis
Anita and Robert
Simons

Peter and Nicky
Strasser
Mark and Rachel
Spigelman
Kathy and Greg Shand
Peter and Edith Ryba
Phillip and Susie
Wolanski
Neil and Karen Midalia
Lance Shofer
Sam and Barbara Linz
Anna and Stephen
Marks



THANK YOU ALSO TO

Waverly Council and
Bondi Pavilion Staff
Tim McGarry
Chris Tomlinson
Antoine Lespets from
Lespets & Camden
Fine Violins
Kirsty Walker
Valerie Davis
Assoc. Prof. Stewart
Walker

PRODUCERS
Michael and Isabel Shur
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
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Anna Johns
Yafa Goldschmidt

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Bettina Kaiser art
+ design

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In the last 15 years, Moira Blumenthal Productions has established itself as Australia's premier Jewish theatre company, with a consistent record of annual plays about Jewish life that are both commercially and critically acclaimed.



MOIRA BLUMENTHAL PRODUCTIONS

Australia's Premier Jewish Theatre Company


Founded by Moira Blumenthal, whose reputation as a producer and director spans many years and three continents, the company is committed to working with Australia's best actors and designers to bring the wider community incredible Jewish plays that are both entertaining and illuminating.

Past productions include *From Door To Door*, *The Chosen*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *Coming to See Aunt Sophie*, *You Will Not Play Wagner*, *The Man in the Attic*, *The God of Isaac* and *Our Second Stage*.

Moira Blumenthal Productions is proud to have partnered with Shalom in co-producing Jewish theatre in Sydney for the past nine years. We are grateful for their support.

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