

Music has the power to heal, to transcend pain and anguish, and to bring hope. Even through humanity's darkest chapter—music persists!

**Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts,
Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust,
New West Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, Los Angeles Lawyers
Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony
Join forces to bring an extraordinary event to Los Angeles!**

Violins of Hope

**A Month-Long Series of Concerts and Exhibitions
A Year-Long Art Education Program**

**Violinists Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman—Two International Stars
with Close Ties to Violins of Hope to Perform in Advance at The Soraya**

March 22 to April 30, 2020

(Los Angeles, CA, February 25, 2019) Four symphonic orchestras, a major heritage museum and one of Los Angeles' leading performing arts centers will join forces in 2020 for an ambitious collaborative initiative that will bring to life the sounds of music once lost.

Violins of Hope is an internationally renowned project created to celebrate the triumph of the human spirit. At the heart of **Violins of Hope** is a collection of over 60 stringed instruments rescued from the Holocaust and restored by second-generation violinmaker, Amnon Weinstein, and his son, Avshalom in their shop in Tel Aviv.

Now, this unique collection will come to Los Angeles for the first time March 22 to April 26, 2020 for a month-long series of concerts, exhibits, and student educational programming at several Los Angeles cultural institutions. Each concert in the **Violins of Hope** series will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein's collection. Artist in Residence and Northridge native **Niv Ashkenazi**, the only individual musician in North American entrusted with one of the collection's rescued violins, will take the storied instruments on a tour to Los Angeles area schools.

"The violin is alive, is existing, and is going to talk to all the world. Each violin like that you are going to play, it's for millions of people that are dead. That is victory. And each concert is victory!" said Amnon Weinstein.

Susanne Reyto is the Chair of Violins of Hope, Los Angeles County and is responsible for working with Weinstein to bring the violins to the regions.

“With three generations born since the end of the Holocaust, how do we keep alive the memories of those who perished? Each instrument of the Violins of Hope shares a common past from this chapter in human history, but more so, each violin embodies a personal story,” said Thor Steingraber, Executive Director of The Soraya. “Some were once played on the streets in the hands of klezmer musicians, and some held pedigrees in world-class concert halls. To experience firsthand their resonance, musical and historical alike, creates an immediate connection to our collective past.”

Violins of Hope has been featured in the documentary, *Violins of Hope: Strings of the Holocaust*, and a book *Violins of Hope: Violins of the Holocaust—Instruments of Hope and Liberation in Mankind’s Darkest Hour*

About Violins of Hope Performances at The Soraya

Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, The Soraya serves the CSUN community, the 1.9 million residents of the San Fernando Valley, and the broader regional market in Los Angeles. Under the leadership of President Dr. Dianne F. Harrison, CSUN is one of the region’s leading public institutions, prioritizing inclusion and known for its many different cultural and religious studies programs.

“The **Violins of Hope** represent the extraordinary power of music to heal, to fight injustice and to celebrate survival,” said Harrison. “Music also brings people together, and we are proud to join with our partners to bring these instruments that were witness to history to Southern California so that we will never forget.”

In the spring of 2017, Steingraber launched the “Music Knows No Borders” series which shines a light on musicians and cultures from around the world. Since the program’s inception, The Soraya has presented artists from 28 nations. Leading up to the **Violins of Hope** program, The Soraya will host world-renowned violinists Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman, both of whom have ties to the Weinstein Violin Shop in Tel Aviv.

Steingraber concluded, “Come hear them and see the violins firsthand. Experience their resonance, musical and historical alike. Make a direct and immediate connection to those who once played them. Regard them as powerful symbols, as emblems of perseverance, as sources of reflection, and as reminders of compassion and empathy. The violins stand as a tangible connection to our past, and their stories reach across the generations and demand of us Never Again.”

The **Violins of Hope** concert series at The Soraya will feature three concerts in two weeks. Each concert in the **Violins of Hope** series will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein’s collection.

- **Opening Night: March 22, 2020** – Artistic Director Noreen Green conducts the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony featuring violinist Lindsay Deutsch.
- March 26, 2020 -- Lahav Shani conducts the Rotterdam Philharmonic with soloist Nelson Freire. Maestro Shani succeeded Zubin Mehta as Music Director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra before becoming the youngest chief conductor in the Rotterdam Philharmonic’s history.
- April 4, 2020 -- The Jerusalem Quartet closes The Soraya leg of the series with works by Haydn, Shostakovich and Brahms. The ensemble debuted in 1996 and has since carried on the string quartet tradition with their award-winning performances and recordings.

- Additionally, the 2019-20 Season will open with Itzhak Perlman who grew up near the violin shop and has a close association with it. Later in the season, Pinchas Zuckerman will appear with Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. Zuckerman's first childhood violin came from the Weinstein's shop in Tel Aviv.

About Violins of Hope Educational Programs and Artist in Residence Niv Ashkenazi

The Los Angeles area concerts are accompanied by school visits, where the history of some instruments – such as the violin thrown out of a cattle train on way from France to Auschwitz, the violin that was buried under the snow in Holland, and the violin that saved lives of people who played in camp orchestra and survived – is told against the larger history of World War II.

The Soraya Arts Education Program serves 10,000 area schoolchildren in grades K-12, as well as CSUN's 40,000 students annually. Through this program, Violins of Hope ambassadors including Artist in Residence and Northridge resident Niv Ashkenazi, the only individual musician in North American entrusted with one of the collection's rescued violins, will take the storied instruments "on tour" to visit local students.

Classical violinist and former student of Itzhak Perlman, **Ashkenazi** will share the Violins of Hope program with students in the San Fernando Valley in over 40 in-school visits and a culminating concert for students at The Soraya. His recent engagements have featured a performance and speaking engagement at the Jewish Funders Network Conference and toured Israel with the iPalpiti Chamber Orchestra. In addition to performing and teaching in Los Angeles, Ashkenazi serves on the professional advisory board of Shane's Inspiration, a global non-profit organization dedicated to building inclusive playgrounds and served on the board of the Los Angeles youth Orchestra. Since 2012, Ashkenazi has been the arranger and featured soloist for TranscenDanceGroup's multimedia show G*D.

About Violins of Hope Los Angeles Partners

Susanne Reyto, Chair of *Violins of Hope*, Los Angeles, was born just six days before the Nazi occupation of Hungary in March of 1944. Her childhood experiences and her difficult escape from Communist Hungary in the late 1950's has left her with an unwavering spirit of optimism and perseverance.

- Her memoir, *"Pursuit of Freedom,"* recounts the story of her early life, and the stories of the turbulent era.
- Susanne will oversee the *Violins of Hope* project, working to use her own experiences to teach the history of the Holocaust through culture and music.
- Susanne served as the Chairman for the Board of Governors of the City of Hope, a board member of the Beverly Hills Women's Club, and the President of Hadassah Los Angeles and ZOA Western Region.

Los Angeles Jewish Symphony / March 22, 2020 at The Soraya

The concert will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein's collection.

Founded by Dr. Noreen Green in 1994, the **Los Angeles Jewish Symphony** (LAJS) is dedicated to the performance and preservation of orchestral works of distinction that explore Jewish culture, heritage and experience.

- The LAJS has performed to great acclaim at such venues as the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Ford Theatres, the Gindi Auditorium at American Jewish University, UCLA's Royce Hall, The Soraya, and many other concert halls, schools and universities.
- As part of its mission, the LAJS commissions new works by Jewish composers and showcases up-and-coming young musicians as well as established artists.

- Each fall, the LAJS takes over 1,000 elementary schoolchildren and their teachers on a journey of musical and cultural discovery in its education outreach program of workshops and concerts, *A Patchwork of Cultures: Exploring the Sephardic-Latino Connection*.
- The LAJS is devoted to building bridges of understanding through music across the diverse cultures of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Lawyers Philharmonic / March 29, 2020 at Wilshire Ebell Theatre

The concert will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein's collection.

Founded by Gary S. Greene, Esq. in 2009, the **Los Angeles Lawyers Philharmonic** is made up of lawyers, judges, law students, and legal staff - all bringing the legal community together through music.

- The philharmonic has earned the status as "LA's Only Legal Orchestra" by the City of Los Angeles.
- The members of the orchestra include conservatory graduates, professional musicians, and some hobbyists who are dusting off instruments they played in their youth.
- The philharmonic has performed more than 40 concerts, raising thousands of dollars to benefit those who cannot afford legal services
- Among the prestigious concert halls the philharmonic has performed in are Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Saban Theatre, and many more.

New West Symphony/April 2, 2020 at Oxnard Performing Arts

The concert will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein's collection.

Celebrating its 25th season, the **New West Symphony** is a professional orchestra with artistic director led by Maestro Michael Christie, appointed as music director in December 2018.

- The New West Symphony orchestra includes some of the world's most famous and accomplished musicians. The tenured orchestra members have appeared as soloists with the finest orchestras, are Grammy Award nominated artists themselves, and can be heard on almost any film soundtrack from *Jurassic Park* and *Star Wars* to *La La Land*.
- New West Symphony presents six Masterpiece Series annually, performing major works from the symphonic repertoire with internationally acclaimed artists as guest soloists.
- The Symphony provides quality outreach and educational opportunities for the communities it serves through its annual Symphony Adventures concert programs for youth, its traveling Music Van, and the Laby Harmony Project, a year-round music and leadership program for underserved students.

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust / April 6-25, 2020

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust will host select violins during the Voices of Hope project, including some that are not in playable condition, inviting students and the public to interact with these artifacts and learn from their history.

Founded in 1961 by a group of Holocaust Survivors, the **Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust** preserves artifacts and educates the public on the history of the Holocaust.

- The architecture and layout of the museum play a significant role in visitors' experiences as the nine rooms descend and decrease in light as visitors' progress towards the darkest part of history.
- The Museum's free Holocaust education program provides learning opportunities for the public, particularly students from underfunded schools and underserved communities.
- The museum will host the 'Violins of Hope' for the duration of the project, allowing members of the public to interact with the instruments and learn from their stories.

Long Beach Symphony / April 26, 2020 at Terrace Theatre, Long Beach

Music Director Eckart Preu, featuring Niv Ashkenazi

The concert will feature performers and soloists using instruments from the Weinstein's collection.

Violins of Hope will conclude its Los Angeles visit on April 26, 2020 with a Chamber Music Concert featuring the Long Beach Symphony musicians playing violins, viola and cello from the Violins of Hope collection. They will perform "Hatikvah" from the film *Munich* (John Williams), "Theme from Schindler's List" (Williams) "Symphony No. 1, 2nd mvmt, Psalm" (Ben-Haim) and "Requiem" (Verdi).

Long Beach Symphony is one of California's largest professional regional orchestras providing quality live performances, interactive family programming, and educational opportunities to the community of Long Beach.

- Under the baton of Music Director Eckart Preu, the Long Beach Symphony presents more than 100 concerts and events a year that reach more than 300,000 residents of the Long Beach area.
- The Symphony was founded in 1934 and has since expanded its programming to include a Classical series, a POPS! series, and free educational and community engagement programs.
- The Long Beach Symphony's robust free education program includes Instrument Petting Zoos, Family Concerts, Elementary School Ensembles, and many more programs that have reached over 1 million children in the Long Beach Area.
- The Symphony performs in Downtown Long Beach at the beautiful Long Beach Performing Arts Center's Terrace Theater and the Long Beach Arena

Violins of Hope Founders: the Weinstein Family

81 years ago, Moshe Weinstein and his wife, Golda, moved to Tel Aviv and opened a violin shop. They had both graduated from the Vilna conservatory, Moshe as a violinist and Golda as a pianist, and followed the large Jewish emigration from Europe to Palestine.

In postwar Europe, survivors of the Holocaust — remnants of the continent's once rich and thriving Jewish communities — poured out of liberated concentration camps, work camps, displaced-persons camps. Some made their way to British Mandate Palestine and what would soon become the new, modern Jewish state of Israel. Many made their way to our shores in the United States, Canada, Latin America. Countless more remained locked behind the Iron Curtain as the Cold War settled across the globe.

Amid the human destruction and displacement, the treasures of the Jewish people also were displaced. The sacred — Torah scrolls, prayer shawls and other ritual items — but in even greater numbers, the artistic and musical treasures sacred to Jewish culture throughout Europe. The Nazis burned, smashed, looted and confiscated the possessions of millions. But some precious pieces remained. Many musical instruments survived when their owners did not. Many more were lost or abandoned as their owners escaped the war. And when the Allies liberated Europe in 1945, hope remained. For Moshe and Golda's son, Amnon Weinstein, that hope manifested in the thin wooden bodies of violins, violas and cellos rescued from the Holocaust.

Amnon and his son, Avshalom, created *Violins of Hope* to celebrate the triumph of the human spirit. Using their private collection of over 60 violins, violas, and cellos all restored since the end of World War II, the Weinstains continue to tell the story of the instruments' previous owners, each with their own personal stories from the Holocaust.

Weinstein is the subject of the documentaries *Le Voyage d' Amnon*; *Violins in War Time*; *Orchestra in Exile* a documentary about Bronislaw Hubermann and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Violins of Hope Background

In 1938, Moshe Weinstein fled the spreading upheaval in pre-War Europe, armed with his precious skills as a violin-maker. He sought refuge in a small town that had yet to blossom into a city, opening his family-run business on a small dirt road. As Tel Aviv grew, so did the Weinstein violin shop, becoming an integral part of the city's burgeoning cultural haven for refugee musicians.

In 1985, a single instrument was brought to the shop for repair. When Moshe's son, Amnon, took it apart, he uncovered the violin's direct connection to Auschwitz, the concentration camp that claimed more than 1 million lives. Thirty years later, *Violins of Hope* has grown to more than sixty violins, each with its own story -- some were recovered from concentration camps, and some were hidden for years, some were once played on the streets by klezmer musicians, and some had pedigrees in world class concert halls.

Mentioned throughout the Holy texts, musical instruments, especially the string instruments that were the violin's predecessor, were exalted. Beginning in the Renaissance, Jewish violin players made their mark. And in the centuries since, the violin accompanied the Jewish people into exile. These prized possessions were not purveyors of music alone. They carried the collective memory of a people, and brought cultural influence throughout the globe. This was never truer than during the Holocaust.

The Weinstein's violin shop was founded in Tel Aviv by Amnon's father, Moshe, in 1939, a decade before the establishment of the state of Israel. Before the Weinstains began collecting "refugee" violins from the *Shoah*, the Holocaust, Moshe was the luthier for the Palestinian Philharmonic, and provided many of the instruments to the orchestra that saved so many Jewish lives. By the 21st century, Amnon Weinstein and his son, Avshalom had procured and restored more than 60 violins, violas and cellos, calling their collection *Violins of Hope*.

About Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

The 2018-19 Season marks the eighth year for the award-winning Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts, which has quickly become one of the cultural jewels of the greater Los Angeles region. Under the leadership of Executive Director Thor Steingraber, The Soraya continues to expand its programming and outstanding multidisciplinary performances. The mission of The Soraya is to present a wide variety of performances that not only includes new and original work from the Los Angeles region but also work from around the world that appeal to all of LA's rich and diverse communities.

Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, The Soraya's season offers a vibrant performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family, and international events that will serve to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley, and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning, 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the *Los Angeles Times* as "a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events."

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