

Portland Center Stage at

THE ARMORY
PRESENTS

Mona Golabek in
The Pianist of Willesden Lane

**Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*
by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen**

Adapted and Directed by Hershey Felder

June 17 – June 30, 2017

On the U.S. Bank Main Stage

Artistic Director | Chris Coleman

**The Samantha F. Voxakis and Karen Racanelli
production of**

Mona Golabek in
The Pianist of Willesden Lane

**Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*
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Scenic Designers
Hershey Felder and
Trevor Hay

Costume Designer
Jaclyn Maduff

Lighting Designer
Christopher Rynne

Assistant Lighting
Designer Jason Bieber

Sound Designer/
Production Manager
Erik Carstensen

Projection Designers
Andrew Wilder and
Greg Sowizdrzal

Video Director
Lawrence Siefert

Production Dramaturg
Cynthia Caywood, Ph.D.

Associate Director
Trevor Hay

Stage Manager
Kelsey Daye Lutz*

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of
Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

TIME & PLACE

World War II: Vienna, Austria, 1938 — London, England, 1942

The running time of *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

The photo, video or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

By Chris Coleman

As I sat watching Mona Golabek's *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* for the first time, I found myself riveted by her hands. She lures us into the story of her mother's journey with the sound of her voice: simple, unadorned, hushed. But it's when her hands touch the keys of the piano and the exquisite compositions that her mother fell in love with long ago begin to come to life that I found myself held in a hypnotic spell.

The piece is a memoir and a tribute to a woman who found her solace and salvation in the music her hands were able to bring to life during the travails of World War II. It is an honor to have Mona back in Portland to share this story on our stage.

FROM THE PERFORMER: Mona Golabek

My mother, Lisa Jura, was my best friend. She taught my sister, Renee, and me to play the piano. We loved our piano lessons with her. They were more than piano lessons — they were lessons in life. They were filled with stories of a hostel in London and the people she knew there. Her stories were our folklore, bursting with bits and pieces of wonderful characters who bonded over her music. Sitting at the piano as a child, I would close my eyes and listen to her lilting voice and imagine her world. She always believed “each piece of music tells a story.” Her legacy has inspired my music and my life. I pass along her story in the hope that it may enrich the passion and music that lie in each of us.

Ms. Golabek would like to thank:

First and foremost, my heartfelt gratitude to the extraordinary British people who opened their hearts and souls and saved the lives of so many young refugees, including the “kinder” of 243 Willesden Lane.

To those who have given so much love and support:
Richard Burkhart, Christine Burrill, Dr. Kiumars Bakshandeh, Lee Cohen, Josh Aronson, Lee Condon, Fred Cook, Chuck Hurewitz, Dr. Michael Berenbaum,

Steve Robinson, Pebbles Wadsworth, Ambassador Fay Hartog-Levin, Helen Zell, Victoria Mann Simms and Ron Simms, Jason Brett, Dr. Lauren Streicher, Samara Hutman, Dr. Jane Foley, Susan and Moses Libitzky, Sandy and Larry Post, Barbara Grill, Brian Drolet, Sarah Papier, Eve Rodsky, Nancy Fisher, Larry Kirshbaum, Patti Kenner, Hon. Dr. Waltraud Dennhardt-Herzog, the Hollanders, Julie Anderson, Marc Whitmore, Fred Cook, Robert Shapiro, Fred Spektor, and Stephen Smith.

Thank you to my beloved family for your daily strength and inspiration: Jackie (for her unparalleled dedication), London, Jesse, Manny, Gary, and to my beloved sister's children — Michele, Sarah, Jonathan and Rachel — who continue the musical legacy and carry the torch passed down by their grandmother, Lisa Jura.

Thank you to Ron Losby, Lotof Shahtout, and Steinway & Sons. I am honored to be a Steinway Artist.

Thanks to Chris Coleman, Creon Thorne, Lisa Sanman, Diana Gerding, Cynthia Fuhrman, Claudie Jean Fisher, Liam Kaas-Lentz, Lydia Comer, Will Cotter, and everyone at Portland Center Stage.

I am grateful to everyone who has entered my life in connection with *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*: my acting coach Howard Fine, Geffen Playhouse, Samantha Voxakis, and the entire team of Hershey Felder Presents.

And finally, infinite gratitude to the incomparable Hershey Felder who believed in the story “of the little girl who was sent away and told to hold on to her music.”

Mr. Felder would like to thank:

Karen Racanelli, Robert Birmingham, Joel Zwick, Susan and Moses Libitzky, Stephen and Jacqueline Swire, Dan and Phyllis Epstein, Gail Gudmundsen and Mead Killion; everyone at Portland Center Stage; Mona Golabek and Jaclyn Maduff; the production team at Hershey Felder Presents; Kim and Leo.

Thank you to **Michelle’s Piano Company** of Portland for their courtesy in providing the concert grand piano.



STEINWAY & SONS

FEATURE: How hate breeds heroism

The events leading up to the Kindertransport

By Amy Levinson, Artistic Associate/Literary Director for Geffen Playhouse, where The Pianist of Willesden Lane had its world premiere in 2012.

Lisa Jura's story as told by her daughter, Mona Golabek, is one story of thousands, many of which have never been heard. Although each story is entirely unique, as is each person who lived through these horrors, there is a commonality in having survived what led to the evacuation of 10,000 children to England, now known as the Kindertransport. The events leading up to the Kindertransport began with Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, who instigated widespread pogroms (violent mob attacks against Jews) in Germany and other German-occupied areas in November of 1938. And although we could track violent anti-Semitism further back, for the purposes of contextualizing the Kindertransport, we begin with Joseph Goebbels and his propaganda machine.

When Herschel Grynszpan, a young Jewish Pole, received news that his parents, residents of Germany since 1911, had been expelled from Germany along with thousands of

other Poles, he was despondent. When the Jews tried to return to Poland, they found they were not welcome there either, and were interned in a refugee camp to await a place to go. Outraged by the treatment of his parents, Grynszpan sought revenge on the diplomatic official who had been assigned to help him and his family, and on November 7, 1938 he shot Ernst Vom Rath, who died two days later.

When the news of this reached Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels, he positioned the event as a conspiracy of the Jews, when all evidence pointed to the fact that it was simply one young man in desperate straits to save his parents. The Propoganda Minister assured the German people that if they were to take mob action against the Jews, steps would not be taken to stop or punish their actions. The statement from Munich, where the Nazi leadership convened, read: “Demonstrations should not be prepared or organized by the Party, but insofar as they erupt spontaneously, they are not to be hampered.”

Two days later, the Nazi Party and their supporters systematically attacked Jewish populations throughout Germany and the occupied territories. In the span of a few hours, thousands of synagogues, Jewish-owned businesses and Jewish homes were severely damaged or

completely destroyed. The event came to be known as Kristallnacht, translated to “the night of broken glass.” While the signs had been evident to the outside world all along that the Nazi party sought to exile their Jewish populations, this singular event opened the eyes of many, most notably the British, who up until that point had resisted emigration en masse from Germany. The British government had recently denied the entrance of 10,000 children into Palestine, which was under British rule at that time, but in light of these blatant atrocities, Britain’s leadership felt a duty to change their position, and thus the Kindertransport began.

The British government agreed to permit an unspecified number of children (citizens under the age of 17) to come to the British Isles for the period in which the crisis in Germany and the occupied countries continued. Parents or guardians were not permitted to accompany their children, and they were required to post a £50 bond for each child. It was understood that these children were on temporary travel visas and would be returned to their families when it was thought safe to do so. The bond was to be used for their travel expenses home.

The effort to organize these transports was painstaking work, and numerous organizations and individual British

citizens answered the call. The first train left Germany on December 1, 1938. It arrived in Harwich from the Hook of Holland, carrying 200 children, all of them orphans, who had left Germany with just 24 hours notice, each with two bags of clothing.

The Kindertransport was a remarkable humanitarian endeavor as approximately 10,000 children were rescued between December 1938 and September 1939. As violence continued to escalate, it became more and more difficult to remove the children. In September of 1939, the Germans ceased the issue of travel visas for Germany and the annexed countries, ending the opportunity for Britain to offer a safe haven to more children.

The events are described in great detail on kindertransport.org: *Children of the Kindertransport were dispersed to many parts of the British Isles. About half lived with foster families, the others in hostels, group homes and farms in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Those older than 14, unless they were fortunate enough to be sponsored by individuals and sent to boarding schools or taken into foster care, were frequently absorbed into the country's labor force after a few weeks of training, mainly in agriculture or domestic service. Many families, Jewish and non-Jewish, opened*

their homes to take in these children. Many of the children were well-treated, developing close bonds with their British hosts; however, others were mistreated or abused. A number of the older children joined the British or Australian armed forces as soon as they reached 18 years of age and joined the fight against the Nazis. Most of the children never saw their parents again.

It should be noted that many individuals and organizations are recognized for their assistance in implementing the Kindertransport. The story of Mona Golabek's mother, Lisa Jura, helps us to understand how many acts of valor are required to save only one life, and here tens of thousands were saved. In 1989, a group of Kinder, as they are now known, convened to create the Kindertransport Association (KTA) in order to reunite the people who had shared this experience, to revisit an often horrific past that was frequently unspoken by those who had survived it, and to create a written history so their families and the world outside might understand what it meant to be part of this rescue effort. Mona Golabek is a living beneficiary of what the Kindertransport did for generations of Jews. Her grandmother, who wanted so much to preserve the gift of music in the Jura family, has certainly lived on in Mona's extraordinary talent.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Mona Golabek

Lisa Jura

Mona Golabek is the daughter of Lisa Jura, a concert pianist born in Vienna, Austria, who came to England as a young teenage refugee in 1938 as part of the Kindertransport rescue operation. Mona's father, Michel Golabek, was a French resistance fighter who received the Croix de Guerre. Mona's grandparents died at Auschwitz.

Inspired and taught by her mother, Mona became a concert pianist and has appeared at Hollywood Bowl, The Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall, and with major conductors and orchestras worldwide. She is a Grammy nominee and prolific recording artist, and has been the subject of several documentaries, including *Concerto for Mona* with conductor Zubin Mehta.

Her mother is the subject of Mona's acclaimed book, *The Children of Willesden Lane*, now in its 24th printing. The book has been translated and published in French and Italian with forthcoming German, Spanish and Hebrew publications. BBC Feature Films is currently in development for a feature film based on the book.

In 2012, Mona made her debut at Los Angeles' Geffen Playhouse in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, adapted from her book. The production, directed by Hershey Felder, has been acclaimed by critics and audiences across America, with sold-

out runs in New York and London. Mona has received best actress nominations from the New York and Los Angeles Drama Critics, and the show has been listed among the top ten shows in many major cities.

In 2003, Mona established the Hold On To Your Music foundation. With the help of Milken Family Foundation, Facing History and Ourselves, and Annenberg Foundation, she created educational resources for the book that have been adopted into school curricula across America. To date, more than 250,000 students and families have experienced WILLESDEN READ – the educational program spearheaded by the non-profit, which is devoted to spreading the message of her mother’s story.

Hershey Felder

Director/Adaptor

Hershey Felder’s work was recently named to *Time Magazine*’s Top 10 Plays and Musicals. He has played over 4,500 performances of his self-created solo productions at some of the world’s most prestigious theaters and has broken box office records consistently. Writing in *American Theatre*, Hedy Weiss said, “Hershey Felder is in a category all his own.” His shows include: *George Gershwin Alone* (Broadway’s Helen Hayes Theatre, West End’s Duchess Theatre); *Monsieur Chopin*; *Beethoven*; *Maestro (Leonard Bernstein)*; *Franz Liszt in Musik*; *Lincoln: An American Story*; and *Our Great Tchaikovsky*. In addition, he performs concerts of “The Great American Song Book Sing-Along” at every theater where his shows are presented, as well as private venues. Future productions include the new musical *Chosen by G-d*, for which he is writing the music, book and lyrics. His compositions and recordings include

Aliyah, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; Fairytale, a musical; Les Anges de Paris, Suite for Violin and Piano; Song Settings; Saltimbanques for Piano and Orchestra; Etudes Thematiques for Piano; and An American Story for Actor and Orchestra. Hershey is the adaptor, director and designer for the very successful play with music, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*; the producer and designer for the new musical *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, directed by Taylor Hackford; and the writer and director for the upcoming *Flying Solo*, featuring opera legend Nathan Gunn. Hershey has operated a full-service production company since 2001. He has been a scholar-in-residence at Harvard University's Department of Music and is married to Kim Campbell, the first female prime minister of Canada.

Trevor Hay

Associate Director

Trevor Hay directed the world premieres of *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra, Abe Lincoln's Piano, Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Musik, Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* and *Our Great Tchaikovsky*. He is the associate director for *Hershey Felder* and *Beethoven*. He is a former member of the historic Old Globe in San Diego where, at the age of nine, his first position was selling Old Globe memorabilia. Over the next 32 years, he went on to various aspects of production on more than 80 presentations, including the Broadway productions of Jack O'Brien's *Damn Yankees, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* and Twyla Tharp's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Included in his 23 seasons at The Old Globe were 11 seasons of the Summer Shakespeare Festival Repertory, as well as work on Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County*, directed by Sam Gold, and Hershey

Felder's *George Gershwin Alone*, *Monsieur Chopin* and *Maestro Bernstein*.

Erik Carstensen

Sound Designer/Production Manager

Erik has worked for Eighty-Eight Entertainment for 10 years. He has served as sound designer on *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, *Jamaica Farewell*, *Baritones Unbound*, *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*, *Jack Lemmon's Son*, *Rockstar*, *An American Story*, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* (2012 Ovation Award nomination), *Maestro Bernstein*, *Our Great Tchaikovsky* and *Beethoven*, *As I Knew Him* (2009 Ovation Award).

Formerly, he was the master sound technician at The Old Globe in San Diego and was production engineer on over 60 productions, including *Allegiance*, *Robin and the Seven Hoods*, *A Catered Affair*, Hershey Felder's *George Gershwin Alone*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Chita Rivera: The Dancers Life*, *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *The Full Monty*, *Dirty Blonde* and *Floyd Collins*. Erik is a member of IATSE Local 122.

Jason Bieber

Assistant Lighting Designer

Jason made his debut with Eighty-Eight Entertainment for the world premiere of *Jack Lemmon Returns*. His other design credits include The Old Globe's *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Since Africa*; Mo'olelo's *Cowboy Versus Samurai* (2007 Patté Award), *Permanent Collection*, *Night Sky* (2008 Patté Award), *Good Boys*, *Yellowface*, *Stick Fly*, *Kita y Fernanda*, *Extraordinary Chambers*, and *The Amish Project*; Moxie Theatre's *Topdog/Underdog*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Eurydice*,

Bluebonnet Court and *Bleeding Kansas*. Jason is currently the assistant lighting designer for San Diego Opera.

Lawrence Siefert

Video Director

For over 20 years, Lawrence has been involved in theater, corporate events and film. His credits include projection design for San Diego Opera's *Wozzeck* and *Moby Dick*. He is a recipient of two Telly Awards and one Davy Award for *How Do You Build Hope* (Habitat for Humanity). Lawrence has been a member of IATSE Local 1022 since 1996.

Jaclyn Maduff

Executive Director/Costume Designer

Jaclyn has been the director of Hold On To Your Music, Inc since its formation in 2003. Hold On To Your Music is a non-profit foundation dedicated to providing educators and students with the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*. For more information, visit holdontoyourmusic.org.

Meghan Maiya

Research

Meghan is the director of research and special projects for Hershey Felder Presents. She has been doing biographical and historical research for HFP's new theatrical productions since 2013. Productions include *Hershey Felder as Franz Liszt in Musik*; *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*; and *Our Great Tchaikovsky*. Additional projects include production research and imagery for *Louis and Keely: 'Live' at the Sahara*; scenic decoration for *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, *Abe Lincoln's Piano*, *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* and *Jamaica Farewell*.

Formerly, Meghan worked in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health at the University of California, San Diego, as a senior program evaluation specialist and project manager. She managed multiple research projects in the fields of integrative medicine and behavioral health. Additionally, Meghan spent 12 years as a psychology professor at San Diego State University and local community colleges.

Karen Racanelli

Executive Producer

Karen comes to Hershey Felder Presents from Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where she worked as general manager for 21 years, overseeing daily operations and producing several shows performed and/or directed by Hershey Felder. She has represented the League of Resident Theatres during negotiations with both Actors' Equity Association and the union of stage directors and choreographers, served on LORT's executive committee, and served as a panelist at several LORT meetings. Prior to her tenure at Berkeley Rep, Karen worked as an independent producer at several Bay Area theater companies and served on the boards of Climate Theatre, Overtone Theatre Company, Park Day School, and Julia Morgan Center for the Arts. Karen was named a 2016 "Unsung Hero of Arts Administration" by the national arts and culture organization, Fractured Atlas. She is married to Bay Area arts attorney MJ Bogatin.

Samantha F. Voxakis

Producer/Company Manager

Samantha is a native of Maryland where she spent 12 memorable years working in the front office for the Baltimore

Orioles. Since 2004, Sam has been responsible for the day-to-day operations of Eighty-Eight Entertainment/Hershey Felder Presents. With special thanks to her very supportive family, and to Ms. Golabek and Mr. Felder.

Kelsey Daye Lutz

Stage Manager

The Armory credits include: stage manager for *His Eye is on the Sparrow*, *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, *Hold These Truths*, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* (first engagement), *Each and Every Thing*, *Forever*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *The Lion*, *The People's Republic of Portland* (second engagement), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *The Typographer's Dream*, *The Last Five Years* and *A Small Fire*; and production assistant for *Clybourne Park*, *Venus in Fur*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The North Plan* and *Anna Karenina*. Kelsey Daye is a graduate of University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She would like to thank her pups for all their unconditional love, and Shamus for being wonderful.

Hershey Felder Presents

Producer

Hershey Felder Presents is the newest division of Eighty-Eight Entertainment, which was created in 2001 by Hershey Felder and is devoted to the creation of new works of musical theater. Current projects include the musical plays *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, *Our Great Tchaikovsky* and *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. Recordings include *Love Songs of the Yiddish Theatre*; *Back from Broadway*; *George Gershwin Alone*; *Monsieur Chopin*; *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*; and *An American Story for Actor and Orchestra*.

Portland Center Stage at The Armory

Portland Center Stage at The Armory is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. An estimated 150,000 people visit The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. Eleven productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events — created in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 20 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. The Northwest Stories series was recently launched to develop and produce works about, or by artists from, the Northwest region. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Chris Coleman

Artistic Director

Chris joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory as artistic director in 2000. Before coming to Portland, Chris was the artistic director at Actor's Express in Atlanta, a company he co-founded in the basement of an old church in 1988. Chris returned to Atlanta in 2015 to direct the world premiere of *Edward Foote* at Alliance Theatre (Suzi Bass Award for Best Direction, Best Production and Best World Premiere). Other

recent directing credits include the Off-Broadway debut of *Threesome* at 59E59 Theaters; a production that had its world premiere at The Armory. Favorite directing assignments for The Armory include *Astoria: Part One* (which he also adapted), *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Threesome*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Clybourne Park*, *Shakespeare's Amazing Cymbeline* (which he also adapted), *Anna Karenina*, *Oklahoma!*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Crazy Enough*, *King Lear*, *Outrage* and *The Devils*. Chris has directed at theaters across the country, including Actor's Theater of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ACT Theatre (Seattle), The Alliance, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop and Center Stage (Baltimore). A native Atlantan, Chris holds a B.F.A. from Baylor University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He is currently the board president for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Chris and his husband, Rodney Hicks – who is appearing in the new musical *Come From Away*, which opened on Broadway in March – are the proud parents of an 18-lb Jack Russell/Lab mix, and a 110-lb English Blockhead Yellow Lab. For the past three years, Chris has had the honor of serving as the director for the Oregon Leadership Summit.

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Actors take chances. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't. But none of these actors would be on stage tonight without taking chances. It's part of growth, and we're all made to grow. That's why we're such a proud supporter of Portland Center Stage. Let this performance inspire you to take the chances that power your own growth.