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PORTLANDCENTERSTAGE

The Guide

A Theatergoer's Resource

The Pianist of Willesden Lane

Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*
by Mona Golabek & Lee Cohen Aaron Posner

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Mona Golabek



Ms. Golabek is the founder and president of the non-profit organization Hold On To Your Music. She is an author, recording artist, radio host and internationally acclaimed concert pianist. Ms. Golabek was taught by her mother, Lisa Jura, who, along with Lisa's mother Malka, is the subject of Ms. Golabek's book, *The Children Of Willesden Lane*. The work of Ms. Golabek and her sister, the late concert pianist Renee Golabek-Kaye, has been inspired by the words their grandmother uttered to her daughter at the Vienna train station as Lisa boarded the Kindertransport for safety in London at the outset of World War II. "Hold on to your music," Malka told her, "It will be your best friend."

A Grammy nominee, Ms. Golabek has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the People's Award of the International Chopin Competition. She has been the subject of several PBS television documentaries, including *More Than the Music*, which won the grand prize in the 1985 Houston Film Festival, and *Concerto for Mona*, featuring Ms. Golabek and conductor Zubin Mehta. She has appeared in concert at the Hollywood Bowl, the Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall and with major orchestras and conductors worldwide.

Ms. Golabek is the creator and voice of The Romantic Hours radio program, which combines classical music with readings of poetry, letters, and stories and has been syndicated on the WFMT Radio Network and XM Satellite Radio.

Ms. Golabek's recordings include the best-selling *Carnival of the Animals* featuring the voices of Audrey Hepburn, Ted Danson, Lily Tomlin and others; Ravel's *Mother Goose* featuring Meryl Streep; and the Piano Trios of Arensky and Tchaikowsky, recorded in collaboration with Renee Golabek-Kaye and including the Poulenc Double Piano Concerto.

A play titled *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, based on the book, adapted and directed by Hershey Felder, and in which Golabek appeared in a one-woman show, opened at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles in April 2012.

Mona is the proud aunt to her late sister's four children, who are keeping alive the legacy passed down by their great-grandmother, their grandmother and their mother: Michele, Sarah and Rachel, who are pianists; and their brother Jonathan, a violinist.

Courtesy of <http://holdontoyourmusic.org/index.html>

Repertory of Fear and Hope *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, a Jewish Girl's War Story

The New York Times,

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/23/theater/the-pianist-of-willesden-lane-a-jewish-girls-war-story.html?_r=0

Hold On To Your Music Foundation

In 1938, 14-year-old Lisa Jura was a musical prodigy in Vienna who hoped to become a concert pianist. Her dreams were interrupted when Hitler's armies advanced. Her parents were forced to make the difficult decision to secure safe passage to London aboard the Kindertransport for only one of their three daughters. They chose to send Lisa, believing her talent would give her strength and could help reunite them one day. There, in a hostel on Willesden Lane, Lisa's music became a beacon of hope for her, as well as other displaced children who would cheer her on as she fought to realize her musical dreams. Our name is derived from the words spoken to Lisa by her mother as she boarded the Kindertransport: "Hold on to your music. It will be your best friend."

Hold On To Your Music presented "I am a Pianist," the story of Lisa Jura and The Children of Willesden Lane in 2015. The 60-minute feature documentary was produced in collaboration with **KLCS/PBS** and with major sponsorship from the **Simms/Mann Institute**.

Concert pianist Mona Golabek's mother was a refugee from Vienna, a piano prodigy who overcame overwhelming odds to become a performer and teacher who inspired all whom she met. This film chronicles Mona's journey to bring her mother's story to school children across America—from Birmingham, Alabama to her hometown of Los Angeles—glimpsing Mona on stage, in classrooms, at the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, and bringing messages of perseverance and understanding to enthusiastic young audiences, ultimately creating a legacy that resonates in the lives and music of multiple generations today.

The film also includes interviews with surviving Kinder as well as excerpts from the Los Angeles performances at the Cortines High School for the Performing Arts in November 2014 for 10,000 Los Angeles Unified School District students and participation of the Colburn Youth Orchestra.

"I am a Pianist" brings a unique look to the lessons of the Holocaust to students and audiences of the 21st Century.



Characters in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*:

Mona Golabek – A concert pianist

Lisa Jura – Her mother, a piano student.
Born in 1924 in Vienna

Malka Jura, “Mama” – Lisa’s mother

Abraham Jura, “Papa” – Lisa’s father

Rosie – Lisa’s older sister

Sonja – Lisa’s younger sister

German soldiers – occupying Vienna

Professor Isselis – Lisa’s piano teacher at age 14

Sid Danziger – Abraham’s cousin in London
to whom they send Lisa on the Kindertransport

Captain and Mrs. Richmond –
the owners at Peacock Manor

Gladys – head servant at Peacock Manor

Monty – chauffeur at Peacock Manor

Betsy – cook at Peacock Manor

Carrie – handmaiden at Peacock Manor

Mr. Piedmont – butler at Peacock Manor

Mr. Hardesty – director of the Bloomsbury house

Mrs. Cohen – head of Willesden Lane

The Children of Willesden Lane:

Mr. Dimble – the foreman at Platz
and Sons garment factory

Mrs. Canfield – the Quaker neighbor who harbors
Lisa after Willesden Lane was bombed

Myra Hess – famous British pianist

Aaron – a child from Willesden Lane
who takes a liking to Lisa

Professor Mabel Floyd – Lisa’s master teacher
at the London Royal Academy of Music

Captain – the French captain who comes back for Lisa

Lisa’s Austria:

Until age 14, Lisa Jura grew up in Vienna, Austria.
Known worldwide for classical music, Vienna in 1938 was
a center of Jewish economic life, culture, and education.

* In 1938, 192,000 Jewish people lived in Austria.

*9% of Vienna’s population was Jewish

*On March 12, 1938, Germany annexed the Republic
of Austria in what is known as the Anschluss.

*Between 1938 and 1940, 117,000
Jews emigrated from Austria.

*After October 1941, emigration shifted to forced
deportation by the Nazis to ghettos in Poland and
Eastern Europe where many were killed.

*By November 1942, the Jewish population in Austria
had fallen to 7,000 – many of whom were married to
non-Jews or were in hiding.

German Expansion and Antisemitism

By 1938, Hitler and his Nazi party had been in power for five years. During those years, they carried out their vision of a racial state, step by step. If a measure encountered little or no opposition, they went a little further next time. They advanced their plans for a new German empire in a similar way. On March 11, 1938, German troops entered Austria, the country of Hitler’s birth.

When no one protested the invasion, the Nazis turned their attention to Czechoslovakia. That fall, they took over parts of the country. In their newly acquired territories, the Nazis quickly applied their racial laws.

Jews in Greater Germany tried desperately to emigrate only to encounter stumbling blocks. The

Nazis did not stand in their way. They were happy to let the Jews go as long as they left behind their money and possessions. Few nations, however, were willing to admit penniless refugees.

Historical & Literary Timeline:

July 29, 1921 – Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist Party (Nazi).

1924 – Lisa Jura is born.

Jan 30, 1933 – Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

March 12, 1933 – First concentration camp opens.

March 23, 1933 – Hitler gains dictator power over Germany.

July 14, 1933 – Nazi Party is declared the only party in Germany.

August 19, 1934 – Hitler becomes Fuhrer of Germany.

March 16, 1935 – Hitler violates treaty of Versailles.

1935 – Nuremberg Laws revoke rights and citizenship from Jews.

March 12, 1938 – Germany annexes Austria in what is called the Anschluss.

1938 – Lisa Jura attends her piano lesson, but is told she cannot ever return to the studio.

November 9/10, 1938 – Kristallnacht – Night of Broken Glass.

December 2, 1938 – First Kindertransport train arrives in Harwich, England.

1938 – Lisa Jura leaves her family and arrives in England on the Kindertransport train.

January 30, 1939 – Hitler makes a speech about his plans to annihilate the Jews.

September 1, 1939 – Germany invades Poland.

September 3, 1939 – British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declares war with Germany; King George VI makes a speech addressing British involvement in World War II.

1940 – Nazis deport German Jews to Poland and force Jews to live in ghettos; the final Kindertransport train departs from the Netherlands.

September 1940 – The Blitz—German air force bombing of England—begins.

1941 – The first Nazi death camps open. The systematic extermination of Jews begins.

December 7, 1941 – Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and the United States enters WWII.

January 15, 1942 – Lisa Jura auditions for the London Royal Academy of Music.

June 1942 – Lisa Jura is accepted to the London Royal Academy of Music.

April 30, 1945 – Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

September 2, 1945 – World War II and the Holocaust end.

December 19, 1997 – Lisa Jura dies.

Kristallnacht: A Turning Point

By 1938, Hitler and his Nazi party had been in power for five years. During those years, they carried out their vision of a racial state, step by step. If a measure encountered little or no opposition, they went a little further next time. They advanced their plans for a new German empire in a similar way. On March 11, 1938, German troops entered Austria, the country of Hitler's birth.

When no one protested the invasion, the Nazis turned their attention to Czechoslovakia. That fall, they took over parts of the country. In their newly acquired territories, the Nazis quickly applied their racial laws.

Jews in Greater Germany tried desperately to emigrate only to encounter stumbling blocks. The Nazis did not stand in their way. They were happy to let the Jews go as long as they left behind their money and possessions. Few nations, however, were willing to admit penniless refugees.



Defining the Word *Refugee*

The Children of Willesden Lane describes the experiences of a young refugee during World War II.

Encourage students to build a working definition of the term. A working definition is one that builds to encompass more and more information. Students might begin by explaining what the word *refugee* means to them. How is a refugee like an immigrant? What is the main difference between the meanings of the two words? (Adapted from a lesson created by Yvonne Caamal Canul, a Milken Educator Award recipient)

Dictionaries usually define an *immigrant* as an individual who settles in a foreign country. They define a *refugee* as someone who flees his or her homeland in fear of persecution and therefore cannot safely return home. David M. Donahue and Nancy Flowers of the Amnesty International Human Rights Education Steering Committee offer a more detailed definition based on recent U.S. law and various resolutions passed by the United Nations: *A refugee is defined by the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 and the United Nations as a person who leaves his or her country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.*

When a foreign government acknowledges that a person has left his or her country because of a “well founded fear of persecution,” that government may grant the individual political asylum or refugee status. Political asylum is defined as “legal permission to live in a country because of the danger of persecution to an individual or group of individuals in their homeland.” A person who seeks safety in a foreign country from danger at home is sometimes called an asylum seeker. Discussions about the status of refugees today may be a sensitive topic in some schools. If appropriate, ask students what challenges refugees face in the world today. Encourage students to draw on their own experiences or those of people they know or have read about. Explain that refugees have more protection today than they did during World War II. In fact, the plight of refugees at that time led to new laws after the war. At the same time, the experience of being an outsider has changed very little over the years. For more information on U.S. immigration policies in the 1930s and 1940s, see the Facing History study guide to *America and the Holocaust* (PBS, 81minutes).



“Cast Out” was written by a young refugee who came to England on a *Kindertransport*. His or her name is unknown.

*Sometimes I think it would have been
easier for me to die
together with my parents than
to have been surrendered by them to survive alone
Sometimes it does not seem that they
spared me the hardest Jewish fate
since by sending me away
they burdened me and cast me out
and none suggested I should stay*

*When the Jews were branded there
was one number meant for me
that another had to bear
my perennial agony
is the brunt of my despair*

*Sometimes I feel I am a ghost
adrift without identity
what as a child I valued most
forever has escaped from me
I have been cast out and am lost*

From *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography*. Edited by Karen Gershon. Harcourt Brace, 1966.



Meet a Kindertransport Survivor: Ruth Hect from an interview between Natalie Pertz and Ruth Hect

Who is Ruth Hect?

Ruth Hect is a survivor of the Kindertransport with a true and unusual story. While most Kindertransport trains went to England, Ruth's train went to Belgium. When Ruth's mother took her to the train station, they discovered that Ruth had missed her Kindertransport train. Ruth's mother assured her she would be safe and said goodbye to a seven-year-old Ruth. In order to escape Germans invading Vienna, she was left at the station with a big sign including her name and destination. In reflecting about this time in her life, Ruth says "that's what you did to survive." In Belgium, Ruth lived with a German-Jewish family for two and a half years. Ruth describes the transition to living with strangers and says, "Growing up in Austria was very different; my new family was very intellectual and strict." Despite this, Ruth says, "a young child adjusts quickly and easily when treated nice. I got used to the lifestyle very fast." Ruth moved to the United States in 1952 and has lived in America ever since. Currently at the age of 83, Ruth resides in Plainview, NY, and describes her years in the United States as "the most good and normal years of her life." Years later, Ruth recalls those tragic years and says that for many Viennese Jews it was "very unfortunate for so many that were lost, but we always need to remember them."

Discussion Questions:

- Imagine that you received a ticket on the Kindertransport. Write a thank you letter to the person who gave you the ticket. Describe your new life in England. What challenges do you face? What fears do you have? What hopes do you have? Do you contribute to the war effort? What responsibilities do you have?
- The "KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON" image was originally designed in 1939 as one of three propaganda posters to boost morale during the war. The English government released two other posters that read "YOUR COURAGE, YOUR CHEERFULNESS, YOUR RESOLUTION WILL BRING US VICTORY" and "FREEDOM IS IN PERIL, DEFEND IT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT," but reserved "KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON" and never released it. View the video of the story behind this campaign and the discovery of the lost poster here: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/in-the-media/churchillin-the-news/1405-keep-calm-and-carry-on-the-real-story>
- Imagine it is your job to create a poster to boost English spirits during World War II. What would your message be? Develop a design for your poster. Pay close attention to the requirements in the video. The poster must have a clearly recognizable, but difficult to counterfeit typeface and design, and have a short, encouraging message. The film will also include interviews with surviving Kinder as well as excerpts from the Los Angeles performances at the Cortines High School for the Performing Arts in November 2014 for 10,000 Los Angeles Unified School District students and participation of the Colburn Youth Orchestra.

A Rescuer's Account

Trevor Chadwick explains what motivated him to help with the *Kindertransport*.

In 1938 I was teaching at our family prep school. Rumors of the many distressed children in Central Europe reached us, and it was decided to adopt two, according to Home Office regulations, which required a full guarantee of care and maintenance until the age of 18; strict personal references covering the guarantor's character and solvency were also demanded. Another master at the school and I set off for Prague [Czechoslovakia] to select our pair. We did not know where to begin, and had interviews with various people...Within a few days we had found a couple of small boys of about eight and ten. We got a clear impression of the enormity of the task. We so often saw halls full of confused refugees and batches of lost children, mostly Jewish, and we saw only the fringe of it all.

Soon after our return I felt that I had to do more about it. I went to Friends House, and later to the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany. They were busy finding guarantors, and I flew back to Prague to find children who would fit in with the guarantors' wishes. I took my first air transport rather proudly, on a twenty-seater plane. They were all cheerfully sick, enticed by the little paper bags, except a baby of one who slept peacefully in my lap the whole time. The Customs Officers were a little puzzled and began to open some of the suitcases, which contained the kids' worldly treasures. But when I explained what they meant to the children, [the officers] were completely co-operative. Then there was the meeting with the guarantors— my baby was cooed over and hustled off, and the other nineteen were shyly summing up their new parents, faces alive with hope for the love they were obviously going to be given. I felt depressed as I returned to Prague. Only twenty! This was late in the winter, early in 1939. But on March 15 the air transports came to an end when the Nazis came in. By then I had a hundred or so children waiting to be sent to England...Attention had primarily been paid to the wishes of the guarantors. The majority stipulated girls seven to ten and if possible [blonde]. Boys of twelve and upwards were hard to place. Girls were in the majority on the transports.

I tried to find the most urgent helpless cases. This was not easy. Many were already refugees from Germany and Austria; many parents had "disappeared"...I shall always have a feeling of shame that I didn't get more out.

From *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography*. Edited by Karen Gershon. Harcourt Brace, 1966, pp. 22–25.

Historical Sidelights: The Music of Terezin

Musical Downloads from the novel *The Children of Willesden Lane*:
<http://holdontoyourmusic.org/educationmusic.html>

In England, the residents of Willesden Lane found inspiration in Lisa Jura's music. In a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, the prisoners also turned to music for inspiration and comfort. Many of the prisoners confined in Terezin, or *Theresienstadt* as it was also known, managed to smuggle in musical instruments. One musician dismantled his cello, wrapped the pieces in a blanket along with glue and clamps, and then reassembled the entire instrument in the camp. There he and other musicians played for their fellow prisoners. Historian Ruth Bondy, a survivor of Terezin, explains what that music meant to her: "Listening with closed eyes to Bernard Kaff playing Chopin, one knew oneself to be above all the degradation suffered at German hands, to be a man." Bondy describes concerts where only a "a fraction of the audience had seats; everyone else stood shoulder to shoulder, listening." She writes of one musician, Gideon Klein:

At twenty-three years old, a tall, slim young man with black hair on a pale forehead, Gideon was a superb pianist and a master of languages, philosophy, and composition. He who should have been one of the world's great musicians sat at the old piano, supported on crates, and burst out of the confines of the ghetto, conquering the darkness and shedding light all around.

Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezin, a CD and study guide created by Facing History and Mark Ludwig, director of the Terezin Chamber Music Foundation, provides more information about the music, the composers, and their audiences. What does Ruth Bondy suggest about the role of music in a society? About the power of music to inspire?

About the Oregon Holocaust Memorial

The Oregon Holocaust Memorial, dedicated August 29, 2004, serves as a permanent reminder of the Holocaust, the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews and millions of others by the Nazi regime and its collaborators from 1933 to 1945. Millions were murdered because of their political or religious beliefs, physical and mental disabilities, sexual orientation or assistance to the persecuted. By teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and visiting the Memorial, we pay homage to those who lost their lives during that period. Further, there is hope that we can encourage future generations to be accepting of all people.

History of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial

In 1994, the Oregon Holocaust Memorial Coalition had its beginnings when a local group of Holocaust Survivors formed the Oregon Holocaust Survivors Refugees and Families Committee (OHSRAF). They organized with the purpose of memorializing their loved ones and other millions murdered in the Holocaust by creating a memorial in the city of Portland, Oregon. The site in Washington Park was generously donated by the City of Portland with the unanimous support of the City Council, adding Portland to the list of major cities around the world with such a monument.

The Memorial design was a group project designed by artists Tad Savinar and Paul Sutinen; landscape architects Marlene Salon, John Warner, and Marianne Zarkin; typographic designer John Laursen, and historian Marshall Lee. Upon completion, the Oregon Holocaust Resource Center took over as stewards and caretakers of the Memorial. Today the Memorial is under the stewardship of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education.

With generous support from local individuals, families, businesses and organizations, the Oregon Holocaust Memorial stands as a permanent reminder of the Holocaust and as a living testament to courage.

Tours of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial

The Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education offers guided tours of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial in Washington Park during the school week and on Sundays upon request. Their trained docents are able to accommodate groups of various sizes and often guide groups of students from Oregon and SW Washington schools. **There is no charge for this service, however they do request a donation of \$25 to cover their administrative expenses.** No group will be turned away because of lack of funds. Some funding is available towards transportation and teacher substitutes to schools unable to otherwise afford to visit the Oregon Holocaust Memorial. Please contact OJMCHE at 503-226-3600 or visit www.ojmche.org for more information and to schedule a tour.

Programs at OREGON JEWISH MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Exhibit tours

Take part in a guided tour of the exhibits currently on view at the museum. Contact OJMCHE or visit www.ojmche.org for up-to-date information on exhibits on view.

Films and Discussions in the Museum Auditorium

See a film related to museum exhibition programming in our historic auditorium. Depending on what is on exhibit, we offer related films as well as a short introductory video about Oregon Jewish history. Contact the museum for a list of available films and upcoming special events.

Off-site Tours

Portland Jewish Walking Tour

OJMCHE offers walking tours of Portland with a focus on Jewish immigrant history. Participants will tour Old South Portland by walking through streets while hearing stories about the century old neighborhood. Located in and around southwest Portland. Tours last 2 hours (including transportation) unless modification requested.

Available Anywhere

Traveling Museum Trunk

“A Year in the Life: The Oregon Jewish Immigrant Experience”

Travel through a year in the life of Chaim, a young (fictional) Polish Jewish immigrant, who came to Portland in 1904. Experience the challenges and new adventures that he experienced in his first year – family, travel, business, religious life, culture, education and friendships. The trunk employs a variety of individual small or large group activities. Available to be checked out by educators or experienced on-site at the museum.

Holocaust History Presentation

Two-hour presentation on Holocaust history at OJMCHE or on-site at schools and organizations. Options available at developmentally-appropriate levels for students in grades 6+. Presentations can be tailored to teacher's/students' interest areas, background and time constraints.

Hear from a member of the Speakers' Bureau

OJMCHE works with a Speakers' Bureau of Holocaust survivors and their families to bring survival stories to audiences everywhere. Speakers can travel to schools or organizations, or can meet audiences in OJMCHE's auditorium or another off-site venue. Please allow 90 minutes for a speaking engagement unless otherwise specified.