

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY  
OF ORANGE COUNTY

*presents*

VIOLINS  
*of* HOPE



PHILHARMONIC  
SOCIETY *presents*



# Welcome

The Philharmonic Society of Orange County is honored to present *Violins of Hope*, a poignant and deeply moving collection of stringed instruments that brings to life the stories of Jewish musicians during one of history's darkest times. These instruments, lovingly and meticulously restored by master luthiers, Amnon and Avshi Weinstein, serve as living memorials to the strength and resilience of those who used music to endure and transcend the horrors they faced. In sharing these violins with Orange County audiences, we seek to illuminate the profound role that music can play in transforming lives, fostering remembrance, and offering hope in even the darkest times.

Through the presentation of this extraordinary collection of almost 80 instruments, we aim to educate, inspire, and remind audiences of the enduring strength of the human spirit, while celebrating the role of music as a force for healing, remembrance, and hope.

Tommy Phillips, President & Artistic Director  
Philharmonic Society of Orange County

# VIOLINS *of* HOPE

## *Sponsorship Opportunities*

### JHV 2: The Zimmermann-Krongold Violin

Warsaw, 1924 • Play Level: Excellent

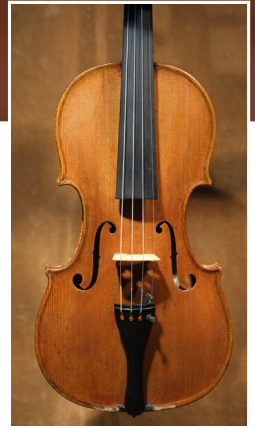
Yaacov Zimmermann was one of the first Jewish violin makers in Warsaw. Shimon Krongold was a wealthy industrialist there and an amateur violinist, who ordered a violin made by Zimmermann. Zimmermann made him a fine instrument with a lovely Star of David inlaid on the back. Inside the violin he glued a label in Yiddish:

“I made this violin for my loyal friend Shimon Krongold” –Yaacov Zimmermann, Warsaw, 1924.

When war broke in 1939 Shimon managed to escape to Russia and ended up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he died of typhus towards the end of the war. A few years later a survivor from Tashkent came to the Krongold family in Jerusalem with the story of his death and a violin in hand. Shimon was the uncle of the Krongolds in Jerusalem, who paid for the violin and kept it in memory of their uncle.

It is important to note that before the war Shimon Krongold helped some Jewish prodigal children, among them Michel Swalbe, who used to get music lessons in Krongold’s home. Swalbe later became the leading violinist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and remembered Krongold as his benefactor.

**JHV 2 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$12,500**



### JHV 7: The Feivel Winger Violin

Made by Brother Placht workshop in Schonbach, Germany around 1880 • Play Level: Very Good

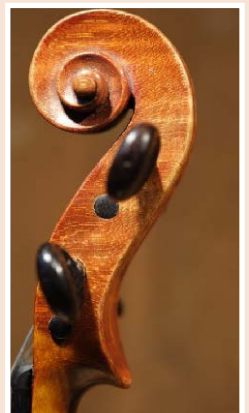
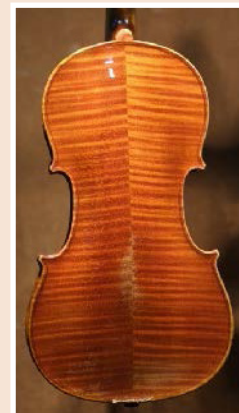
Feivel Winger lived in Romania with his elderly parents, wife and baby daughter, Helen. In October 1941, Feivel and thousands of other Jews were deported by train to the swamp land of Transnistria and further into Ukraine. The suffering and horrors of this exodus was harsh, but Feivel never gave up.

Finally, in the Ukrainian ghetto of Shargorod, he found a way to survive. A famous judge who was an amateur violinist recognized Feivel as the gifted child-violinist he was years ago and gave him his Italian, Amati violin. Feivel, who labored chopping wood for local Ukrainians, tried the violin and his life changed. All of a sudden there was music. And hope.

A local Ukrainian peasant let him play at weddings and holidays in exchange for food and leftovers. Feivel lost his precious violin a short while later, but found a way to bring food to his family and some 17 people playing Ukrainian and Romanian music on another violin.

Many years later, in Israel, Helen brought her father’s violin to be repaired in the Weinstains’ workshop in Tel Aviv, so her old father could play again. Upon hearing this incredible story, the Weinstains repaired the violin and since then, it has been a part of Violins of Hope and serves as a memorial to a man of courage and industry, a man of vision and kindness.

**JHV 7 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$25,000**





## JHV 16: The Bielski Violin

Play Level: Very Good

This is a klezmer’s violin. Most klezmers were self-made and self-taught musicians with a natural talent for music. While many arts were not encouraged by Jewish tradition, music became one of the very few avenues available to artists.

It was quite common for young children to play violins, as told by I.L. Peretz, the Yiddish writer, who wrote in one of his short stories that one could tell how many boys were in a Jewish family by counting the number of violins hanging on the wall.

This is probably the reason why so many klezmer instruments were decorated with the most known Jewish symbol—a Star of David. Most klezmer violins were cheap, made in Czechoslovakia or Germany, in shops that specialized in making ornamented violins.

The klezmer tradition was almost lost during World War II, but lately there has been some revival in Europe as well as in Israel and the United States.

The restoration work of this violin is dedicated to the Bielski partisans who lived, fought and saved 1,230 Jews during the war. Assaela Weinstein, Amnon’s wife, is the daughter of Assael Bielski, one of the three brothers who formed the Bielski brigade in Belarus.



JHV 16 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$12,500

The Bielski violin, a Kleizer instrument with a mother of pearl Star of David.  
A German made instrument, probably around 1870.

## JHV 18: The Shlomo in Auschwitz Violin

Play Level: Very Good

This is clearly a violin that survived the Jewish fate—either a ghetto, a hard labor camp, or worse. We don’t have a clue as to the name of the person who played it, but in the documentary film, *Le Voyage d’Amnon* (*Amnon’s Journey*), it was played by Shlomo Mintz at the gate to Auschwitz. We took it back to where it once maybe belonged and now symbolizes. When Shlomo Mintz played *Ba’al Shem* by Ernest Bloch, we felt as if the violin had gone a full circle.

JHV 18 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$12,500



Shlomo Mintz

## JHV 23: The Auschwitz Violin

Play Level: Excellent

Made in the workshop of Schweitzer in Germany around 1850, this instrument was originally owned by an inmate who played in the men's orchestra at the concentration camp in Auschwitz and survived.

Abraham Davidowitz, who fled Poland to Russia in 1939, later returned to post-war Germany and worked for the Joint near Munich, Germany, helping displaced Jews living in DP (Displaced People) camps.

One day a sad man approached Abraham and offered him his violin, as he had no money at all. Abraham paid \$50 for the violin, hoping that his little son, Freddy, would play it when he grew up.

Many years later, Freddy heard about the Weinsteins' Violins of Hope project and donated his instrument to be fully restored and come back to life. Since then, this violin, now restored to perfect condition, has been played in concerts by the best musicians all over the world. Almost.

It is important to note that such instruments were very popular with Jews in Eastern Europe, as they were relatively cheap and made for amateurs. This particular violin was made in Saxony or Tirol in a German workshop. It carries a false label: J.B. Schweitzer, who was a famous maker in his day.

**JHV 23 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$25,000**



## JHV 24: The Wagner Violin

Play Level: Excellent

A violin made by Benedict Wagner in Ellwangen in 1774, bought by Moshe Weinstein from one of the Palestine Orchestra members who didn't want it anymore.

**JHV 24 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$10,000**





## JHV 32: The Erich Weininger Violin

Made in the workshop of Schweitzer, Germany, around 1870 • Play Level: Very Good

Erich Weininger was a butcher in Vienna as well as an amateur violinist. When the Nazis marched into Austria in 1938, Erich was arrested and sent to Dachau, where he managed to bring along his violin. He later was sent to Buchenwald and though he was not allowed to play there, he still kept his violin.



In a miraculous way, Erich was released from Buchenwald by the help of the Quakers. He then returned to Vienna only to be one of the very last Jews to escape Nazi Europe. He boarded an illegal boat to Palestine, but was soon arrested by British police who did not allow Jews to come to the country. Erich, with a violin in hand, was deported to the Island of Mauritius off the coast of East Africa where he stayed until the end of World War II.

While in Mauritius, Erich did not go idle. He started a band with other deportees, playing classical, local

and even jazz music in cafes, restaurants, etc. He reached Palestine in 1945. His violin was given to our project by his son, Zeev.



JHV 32 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$20,000

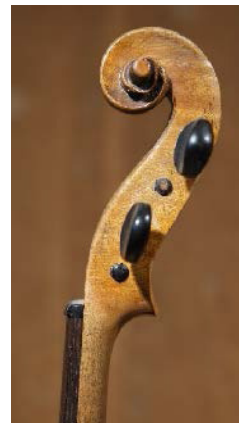
## JHV 34: The Heil Hitler Violin

Play Level: Exhibition Only

This is a non-distinguished instrument, yet a puzzle. We guess that it was owned by a Jewish musician or an amateur who needed a minor repair job done in 1936. The “craftsman” opened the violin for no apparent reason and inscribed on its upper deck: “Heil Hitler, 1936,” adding a big swastika. He later closed the violin and handed it back to the owner, who played on it for years, unaware of the inscription.

A few years ago, the violin was bought by an American violin maker in Washington D.C., who opened it and was absolutely astonished to discover its insides. The maker’s first instinct was to burn the instrument, but on second thought he contacted the Weinstains in Tel Aviv and donated it to the Violins of Hope project. Today it is a part of our collection of instruments, but not to be repaired or played. Ever.

It is important to note that the majority of German violins makers were not Nazis. Many were known to support Jewish musicians who were considered to be their very talented and devoted clients and friends.



JHV 34 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$7,500



## JHV 39: The Haftel Violin

Made by August Darte in Mirecourt, France, around 1870 • Play Level: Excellent

This violin belonged to Zvi Haftel, the first concertmaster of the Palestine Orchestra, later to become the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO). It is a French instrument made by a famous maker: August Darte in the town of Mirecourt around 1870.

Heinrich (Zvi) Haftel was one of about 100 musicians gathered by Bronislaw Hubermann all over Europe in 1936 and brought to Palestine. Haftel was a distinguished violinist before the war and joined Hubermann after he lost his job in a German orchestra. Hubermann's vision to create an all-Jewish orchestra in Palestine saved the lives of many musicians and their families.

**JHV 39 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$15,000**

**Haftel's violin is one of the best in the collection of Violins of Hope.**

## JHV 50: The Morpurgo Violin: A Refugee Violin

Play Level: Good

A few years ago, a 90-something years old lovely lady and her three daughters came to our workshop in Tel Aviv. Signora Morpurgo and her daughters brought us the much treasured violin of Gualtiero Morpurgo, the head of the family from Milan, Italy.

The Morpurgos are an ancient and respected Jewish family. They go back some 500 years in the north of Italy. When still a young child, Gualtiero's mother handed him a violin:

"You may not become a famous violinist, but the music will help you in desperate moments of life, and will widen your horizons. Do not give up, sooner or later it will prove me right."

That moment arrived without warning. Gualtiero's mother was forced to board the first train, wagon 06, at the Central Station in Milan. Destination: Auschwitz. Her son, Gualtiero, was sent to a forced labor camp and—loyal to his mother—took the violin along and often found hope and strength while playing Bach's Partitas with frozen fingers after a long day's work in harsh conditions.

Born in Ancona, Gualtiero graduated engineering school and worked in the shipyards of Genoa. When the war ended, he volunteered to use his engineering skills to build and set up ships for Aliya Bet, helping survivors of the war sail illegally to Palestine. For this, he was awarded in 1992 the Medal of Jerusalem by Yitzhak Rabin.

Gualtiero never stopped playing. He was 97 when he could play no more and put his life-long companion in its case. After his death in 2012, his widow and three daughters attended the Violins of Hope concert in Rome and decided that this is where it belongs—in the hands of devoted musicians in fine concert halls.

**JHV 50 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$12,500**



## JHV 62: The Hecht Violin

Play Level: Very Good

Alex and Fanny Hecht had two sons, Fritz and Ernst. They lived in Billefeld, Germany. When the Nazis took over in Germany, they left for Holland and found a home in Amsterdam. There, Fanny, a violinist, befriended a Christian neighbor, Helena Visser, who also played the violin, as did her daughter, Helena.



In 1943, the Nazis rounded up most Jews living in Amsterdam and sent them to Westerbork and later on to Auschwitz. Fanny Hecht was worried. She was afraid her family would be arrested like so many Jews. One evening, she knocked on the door of Mrs. Visser and asked her to hold on to the violin in case the Hechts were deported. One day, Fanny came upstairs and said, "Mrs. Visser, I want you to take care of my violin, I do not want the Germans to have it, and after the war when we come back, you can give the violin back to me, and if not, the violin is yours."

The sound of the violin is beautiful, and inside the violin, it says: "Antonius Stradivarius Cremona, Faciebat anno 1743," so it is very old. Soon, the Hechts were arrested and sent away. Ernst, age 17, died in Sobibor on July 9th, 1943. Fanny and Alex were killed in Auschwitz on September 17th, 1943. The eldest son, Fritz, died in a labor camp, Monowitz, on January 18th, 1945. No one survived.

The violin was kept by the Dutch family for 74 years. They insisted on giving it back to Jewish musicians. When they heard about the Violins of Hope concerts, they traveled to Israel, visited Yad Vashem, where they researched the history of the Hechts, and upon realizing there was no survivor, they gave it to Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, so the violin could play and tell the tragic story of Fanny, Alex, Fritz, and Ernst Hecht.

**JHV 62 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$5,000**

## JHV 10: Klezmer Violin (Klezmers of Eastern Europe)

Play Level: Good

This beautiful chamber instrument with three inlaid stars of David is dedicated to the rich tradition of the Klezmerim or 'klezmer' musicians, often associated with the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe. Largely instrumental music played at Jewish weddings and other celebratory events, the word derives from the Hebrew "kley" and "zemer" meaning "instrument of song." Stylistically, the Klezmerim is overwhelmingly influenced by Ashkenazi Jewish tradition, but also incorporates the sounds of Russian, German, Polish and Romanian folk music. It typically contains long instrumental passages with folk scales common to the Roma people, which when combined with the aforementioned folk music of Eastern Europe and the modal instrumentalism of Greek and Middle Eastern traditions, creates a widely varied musical palette.



The Holocaust nearly decimated the tradition of klezmer music, as it did to most aspects of European Jewish culture. Klezmer, like most folk music, is an aural tradition handed down from one generation to the next. Almost completely forgotten after World War II, the style was rekindled amongst Jewish musicians residing in the United States in the late 1950's and has enjoyed continued growth and a global resurgence ever since.

**JHV 10 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$7,500**



# JHV 63: The Buried Violin

**Play Level: Exhibition Only**

This is a story of a miraculous violin that was buried under the snow, traveled to Palestine, then to Switzerland, Italy, and returned to Israel.

Heinrich Herrmann grew up in Schwabach and Nirenberg, in the south of Germany where he learned to play the violin. He studied law and became a known judge, but not for long. Following the Nazi Nuremberg laws segregating Jews, he lost his position and soon moved to Holland. In Amsterdam, he became a sales agent of typing machines for Hermès and Mercedes. More importantly, he met and married Ilse.

Heinrich clung to his old, rather inexpensive Gypsy violin and often played chamber music with friends. In the mornings, he tried to secure a visa to Cuba or any other country that would grant him and Ilse a chance to leave Europe.

With this plan in mind, he used all his savings to buy an expensive violin in a famous music shop on Spui Street, Amsterdam. He bought a 150-year-old instrument hand-made in the very famous atelier of the Klotz family in Bavaria, Germany.

Heinrich thought that once he immigrated to Cuba, he could sell the extraordinary violin and support his family, start a new life. Not so easy. Soon, all Jews in Holland were forced to register in the Nazi police and hand in all valuables. Heinrich brought his violin and told the clerk that he had no problem giving away all his valuables, but had a hard time parting with the violin which was so dear to him. "Listen," said the clerk, "Go home with your violin and come back tomorrow with another. But don't tell anyone I said so."

The Klotz was saved for now. The Herrmanns knew their lives were in constant danger. They expected to be imprisoned any day, any minute and asked a Dutch friend, Yan Molder, to keep the violin.

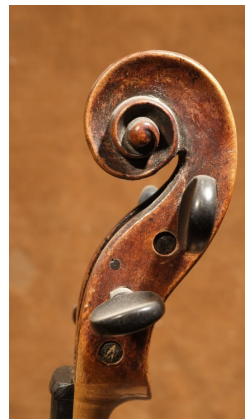
On June 23rd, 1943, they were imprisoned by German police, sent to Westerbork, where all Dutch Jews were incarcerated, and soon sent in freight trains to Bergen-Belsen.

In Amsterdam, Yan Molder was afraid the Nazi police would find out that he held on to Jewish property, and as he could not play the violin, he gave it for safekeeping to a musician friend. This friend also feared the police and buried the violin in his garden. Under the ground and snow—it felt safe.

Another miracle happened to Heinrich and Ilse Herrmann. They survived the concentration camp, and in 1944, were exchanged for German citizens who were expelled from British-held Palestine, under the auspices of the Red Cross. It was the famous operation called Train 222.

1945. World War II was over. A year later, the violin, now badly damaged but "alive and so well" was brought to Heinrich in Palestine. It was repaired and soon Heinrich took it to visit his elderly mother who lived in Switzerland, where he played duets with his sister Lote, reminding his mother of the good old times before the Nazis, the war, and destruction of Europe. On the way, it was lost and found a few times, but was always rescued and always close to Heinrich who played it for the next 40 years. A violin of miracles.

**JHV 63 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$5,000**





## German Cello by Dr. Alfred Stelzner

Dresden, 1893

This beautiful cello, handcrafted in Dresden in 1893, is the only instrument of its kind included as part of the Violins of Hope collection. It belonged to a member of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra which was created in 1936 by famed Polish violinist, Bronisław Huberman. Along with a viola and two violins from this collection, this instrument tells the story of the refugee musicians who, after the 1948 War of Independence, formed the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO).

**German Cello by Dr. Alfred Stelzner – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$10,000**

## JHV 25: Viola by Carl Zach

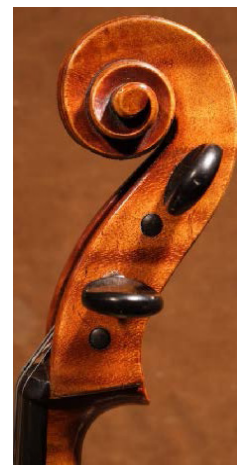
Vienna, 1896

This beautiful viola, handcrafted in Vienna in 1896, is the only instrument of its kind included as part of the Violins of Hope collection. It belonged to a member of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, created in 1936 by famed Polish violinist, Bronisław Huberman.

Most members of this Symphony were world-class Jewish musicians in prestigious orchestras across Europe who fled their positions when the Nazis came to power in 1933, enacting their racial laws across the continent. Huberman enabled dozens of these leading musicians and their families to seek refuge in Palestine, saving as many as 1,000 lives in the process. His vision to create an all-Jewish orchestra in Palestine is credited with saving the lives of some of the most talented musicians of the era.

Along with other instruments in this collection, it tells the story of the refugee musicians who after the 1948 War of Independence formed the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO).

**JHV 25 – Underwriting Opportunity Available: \$10,000**



For more information about the  
**Violins of Hope** project / exhibition in Orange County, please visit:  
**[www.philharmonicsociety.org/violinsofhope](http://www.philharmonicsociety.org/violinsofhope)**



Additional instruments are available for sponsorship.

For questions about underwriting, partnerships and sponsorships, please contact Halim Kim, Senior Director of Development, [halim@philharmonicsociety.org](mailto:halim@philharmonicsociety.org) | (949) 553-2422, ext. 233 or Tommy Phillips, President and Artistic Director, [tommy@philharmonicsociety.org](mailto:tommy@philharmonicsociety.org)

*We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our colleagues at Long Beach Symphony for assisting with materials and support for this extraordinary presentation.*

# VIOLINS OF HOPE

On display in Orange County from May 31 - June 10, 2025  
Read their stories at [www.philharmonicsociety.org/violinsofhope](http://www.philharmonicsociety.org/violinsofhope)

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- 2** The Zimmermann-Krongold Violin
  - 3** The Yaakov Zimmermann Violin
  - 4** The Zimmermann Violin
  - 6** The Moshe Weinstein Violin
  - 7** The Feivel Wininger Violin
  - 8** Klezmer Violin (Klezmers of Eastern Europe)
  - 9** Klezmer Violin
  - 10** Klezmer Violin (Klezmers of Eastern Europe)
  - 13** The Moshe Amiran / Chile Violin
  - 14** The Manfred Katz Violin
  - 16** The Bielski Violin
  - 17** Klezmer Violin (Klezmers who died in WWII)
  - 18** The Shlomo in Auschwitz Violin
  - 19** Klezmer Violin (The Ponar Forest)
  - 20** Klezmer Violin (Shlomo Mintz)
  - 21** Beautiful Klezmer (Mother of Pearl)
  - 22** Klezmer Violin with 3 Stars of David
  - 23** The Auschwitz Violin
  - 24** The Wagner Violin
  - 25** Viola by Carl Zach
  - 27** Klezmer Violin (Jews of Vilna)
  - 28** Klezmer Violin (Cihat Ashkin)
  - 29** The American Soldiers Violin
  - 32** The Erich Weininger Violin
  - 33** The Violin from Lyon, France
  - 34** The Heil Hitler Violin
  - 35** The Wolf and Bunia Rabinowitz Violin
  - 37** Klezmer Violin (Invasion of Normandy)
  - 39** The Haftel Violin
  - 40** The Jacob Hakkert Violin
  - 43** Unidentified Violin
  - 45** The Mark Gendler Violin
  - 46** The Barns Violin
  - 47** The Wedding Violin
  - 48** The Sandor Fisher Violin
  - 49** The Weichold Violin
  - 50** The Morpurgo Violin: A Refugee Violin
  - 52** The Babyn Yaar Violin
  - 53** Klezmer Violin (Haim Taub)
  - 54** The Friedman Violin
  - 55** The Berlin Gypsy Violin
  - 56** The Dachau Violin
  - 59** Klezmer Violin (Jewish Soldiers)
  - 61** The ALPAC Violin
  - 62** The Hecht Violin
  - 63** The Buried Violin
  - 64** Klezmer Violin (Kristallnacht)
  - 66** The Yaakov Weinstein Violin
  - 67** The Henry Brender Violin
  - 68** The Max Beker Violin
  - 72** The Storch Violin
  - 73** The Pentagon Violin
  - 74** The Barnea Violin
  - 77** The Lanier Violin
  - 82** Unidentified Violin
  - 83** Unidentified Violin
  - 84** Unidentified Violin
  - 85** The Strobel Violin
  - 86** The Katrin Violin (The Violin of the Flowers)
  - 87** The Prisoner of War Violin
  - 88** Polish Violin Maker
  - 89** The Paul Leeser Violin
  - 90** The Russo Violin
  - 92** The Russian Army Orchestra Violin
  - 94** The Roddie Edmonds Violin
  - 95** Pavel Zalud
  - 96** The Haas Violin
  - 97** The Shanghai Violin
  - 98** The Asher Violin
  - 99** The Claude Better Violin
  - 100** The Violet Silberstein Violin
  - 102** The Polish Concentration Camp Violin
- German Cello by Dr. Alfred Stelzner  
The Montgomery-Drori Violin  
The Ole Dahl Violin  
The Rabin Violin  
The "Susanne" Violin  
The Vanderveen Violin  
The Wagner and Weichold Violins



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