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Yom Hashoah 2000: An Arts Commemoration of the Holocaust Program

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יום השואה

Yom Hashoah 2000

An Arts Commemoration of the Holocaust

May 1st ~ May 4th
Providence College • Providence, Rhode Island

Ongoing Exhibits May 1 through May 27



Welcome
from the
President

יום השואה

Yom Hashoah 2000

An Arts Commemoration of the Holocaust

May 1st ~ May 4th
Providence College • Providence, Rhode Island

Ongoing Exhibits May 1 through May 27

Yom Hasboah 2000 was organized by Associate Professor of Art History Joan R. Branham, Assistant Chaplain Sister Annette Desmaris, O.P., Associate Professor of Theatre Arts John Garrity, Assistant Professor of Film Studies and Theatre Arts Rev. Kenneth Gumbert, O.P. and Professor of English Jane Lunin Perel.

The following Providence College offices, academic departments, and programs have generously contributed funds, energy, and facilities to make ***Yom Hasboah 2000*** a unique and exciting cultural event:

President's Office
Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Chaplain's Office
College Relations and College Events
The Balfour Center for Multicultural Affairs

Art and Art History Department
English Department
Music Department
Theatre Arts Department

Liberal Arts Honors Program
Women's Studies Program

Additional funding has been provided by:

The DeRabbanan Fund
Hasbro Charitable Trust
Jewish Federation of Rhode Island
Kevin P. Newman '68
Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
The Rhode Island Foundation
The Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum
The Providence Journal

Providence College and the ***Yom Hasboah 2000*** committee would like to make special mention of the support provided by the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Welcome from the President

Providence College is proud to present *Yom Hasboah 2000*. In the year 2000, it is most appropriate that a Catholic liberal arts institution help commemorate the Holocaust. This year marks the Jubilee Year in which Pope John Paul II made a public plea for pardon for the sins committed by Catholics against the people of the Covenant and prayed for reconciliation and brotherhood with Jews throughout the world.

John Paul II's unprecedented efforts to stamp out anti-Semitism, his recognition of the State of Israel, his description of the Jews as "elder brothers in faith," his visit to the Western Wailing Wall and his role as host to a commemorative concert for the Shoah's victims all reflect his efforts to forge deep and abiding links with the Jewish community.

For Providence College, *Yom Hasboah 2000* represents an extension of those papal efforts. It also represents an important continuation of Providence College's fine long-term relationship with the local Jewish community, one that the College has nurtured since its founding.

On behalf of all of the Providence College community—faculty, staff and students—we welcome you to this historic and moving event.

Rev. Philip A. Smith, OFM

Events at a Glance

May 1 • Monday

7:00 - 8:30 PM

'64 Hall, Slavin Center

"After Image: The Uncanny Arts of Holocaust Memory"

Keynote Address by Professor James E. Young, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

8:30 - 9:30 PM

Reception in President's and Faculty Dining Rooms, Alumni Cafeteria

May 2 • Tuesday

4:30 - 6:30 PM

Moore Hall III

"The Last Days"

A screening of Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning documentary film featuring Auschwitz survivor and artist Alice Lok Cahana.

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

"An Evening with Madame F"

Performance Artist Claudia Stevens delivers a multi-media presentation that explores the life and death experience of music in concentration camps.

Reception following in Harkins Hall Rotunda

May 3 • Wednesday

3:00 - 4:00 PM

Feinstein Center Function Room, 4th Floor

"Translating the Holocaust Poetry of Rivka Miriam"

A poetry reading and talk by poet and writer Linda Zisquit

5:00 - 7:00 PM

Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

"Kindertransport" by Diane Samuels

A staged reading of this Holocaust play by Providence College students and faculty members.

7:00 - 7:30 PM

Reception in Harkins Hall Rotunda

7:30 - 8:30 PM

Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

**“Perspectives on Holocaust Literature:
Contemporary Poetry and Fiction in Israel and America”**

A lecture by poet and writer Linda Zisquit, Lecturer in Literature at the Rothberg School at Hebrew University in Jerusalem

8:30 PM

Reception in Harkins Hall Rotunda

May 4 • Thursday

5:30 - 6:30 PM

Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery and Garden

**Exhibition Opening:
“Alice Lok Cahana: Mirrors and Memories, Images of the Holocaust”**

“Through My Mother's Eyes”

Opening Performance to Gallery Exhibit

Dramatic reading by Rabbi Michael Cahana and vocal performance by Cantor Ida Rae Cahana

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery

Artist Appearance and Gallery Talk with Alice Lok Cahana

7:30 - 9:30 PM

Hunt-Cavanagh Garden

Closing Reception featuring The Bresler Klezmer Band

May 1-27

Phillips Memorial Library

Photographic Exhibit: “A Priest Vows Never to Forget”

The Edward P. Doyle, O.P. Collection of Liberation Photographs of Nordhausen Concentration Camp (April 12, 1945)

Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery

Art Exhibit: “Mirrors and Memories, Images of the Holocaust”

Paintings and Collage by Alice Lok Cahana

Introduction

The sonorous ring of the year 2000 reminds us that the Holocaust—one of the 20th century's most defining moments—now moves inescapably from the realm of “memory” to that of “history.” As this shift occurs, several questions emerge around the meaning and memorializing of the Holocaust. Can the Holocaust, an event that pushes the limits of descriptibility and comprehension, be represented in aesthetic terms? How is it possible to translate the Holocaust into paint on canvas, poetry on paper, music, or architectural design? Perhaps even more enigmatic is the Holocaust's ironic ability actually to engender the arts. *Yom Hasboah 2000* at Providence College sets out to probe such quandaries by hosting a commemoration of the Holocaust through the interdisciplinary merging of art, art history, film, drama, literature, photography, and music.

Under scrutiny here is “Holocaust art”—a perplexing phrase in itself, consisting of two seemingly contradictory signifiers. In tandem with the global observance of “Holocaust Remembrance Day,” *Yom Hasboah 2000* at Providence College brings together scholars, artists, musicians, actors, poets, survivors, and their children to comment on the Holocaust's impact upon the art world.

Thank you for your interest, attendance, and participation.

Dr. Joan R. Branham

Associate Professor of Art History and

Organizer of *Yom Hasboah 2000*

May 1 • Monday

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Introductions

Associate Professor of Art History Dr. Joan R. Branham

Welcoming Remarks

Rev. Philip A. Smith, O.P., President of Providence College

Keynote Address

"After Image: The Uncanny Arts of Holocaust Memory"

Professor James E. Young, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
'64 Hall, Slavin Center

Professor James E. Young teaches English and Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Young's lecture, "After-Image: The Uncanny Arts of Holocaust Memory," is based on his book, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, to be published this spring by Yale University Press.

In 1997 Young was appointed by the Berlin Senate to a five-member commission to recommend an appropriate design for Germany's national "Memorial to Europe's Murdered Jews," to be built in Berlin. Young was the only American and the only Jew appointed to the commission and was designated its spokesman. Young also served as the guest curator of a 1994 exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York City, entitled *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, and edited the exhibition catalog for the show.

Young is widely recognized for his expertise and insight about how the memory of the Holocaust has been captured and expressed through the arts and memorials worldwide. He is also the author of *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* and *The Texture of Memory*, which won the National Jewish Book Award in 1994. His articles and reviews have appeared in leading periodicals including *Critical Inquiry*, *The Partisan Review*, *Annales*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Jewish Quarterly* and *The New York Times*.

In addition to teaching at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Young has also taught at New York University as a Dorot Professor of English and Hebrew/Judaic Studies, at Bryn Mawr College in the History of Religion, and at the University of Washington, Harvard University, and Princeton University as a visiting professor. He received his Ph.D. in literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1983.

Young has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and grants including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a Fulbright/Israel Government grant, and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Philosophical Society.



May 2 • Tuesday

4:30 - 6:30 PM

Introductions

Assistant Professor of Film Studies and Theatre Arts
Rev. Kenneth Gumbert, O.P.

“The Last Days”

A film screening of Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning documentary film featuring Auschwitz survivor and artist Alice Lok Cahana
Moore Hall III

This first extraordinary feature from the Shoah Foundation is a stunning document to the inner strength of its “stars.” All are survivors of the genocidal war against the Jews, particularly those in Hungary caught in Germany's crosshairs towards the end of World War II. Director-editor James Moll and producers June Beallor and Ken Lipper, with a push from executive producer Steven Spielberg, combine enlightening testimonials and horrifying historical footage to remind us, yet rejuvenate us with hope for the future.

The five Hungarians who provide the light to the film are the remnants of Hitler's escalated efforts to exterminate the largest remaining Jewish population in Europe, forcing the incarceration of nearly 500,000 people over a three-month span. They provide eyewitness recollections and tear-filled visits to their hometowns and the concentration camps of their pasts. New material was filmed in Hungary, Germany, Poland, and the Ukraine, which Moll combines with ultra-graphic images of the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Academy Award-winning composer Hans Zimmer contributes an appropriate score.

There is nothing extraordinary about this film, except for the individuals it profiles. They provide firsthand glimpses of the horrors of their pasts—teenagers caught in one unfathomable situation after another. Congressman Tom Lantos, artist Alice Lok Cahana, teacher Renée Firestone, businessman Bill Basch, and grandmother Irene Zisblatt tell their stories straight through the camera of Harris Done. From this handful of mesmerizing stories, filmmaker Moll has fashioned a monument to courage and hope.

Excerpted from a review by Elias Savada, Copyright 1999. Unauthorized re-use without permission of the author strictly prohibited.

May 2 • Tuesday

7:00 - 8:00 PM

**“An Evening with
Madame F”**

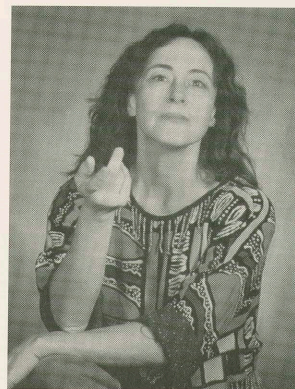
Performance Artist Claudia Stevens delivers a multi-media presentation that explores the life and death experience of music in concentration camps.
Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

“An Evening with Madame F,” with text by Claudia Stevens, music by Fred Cohen and Claudia Stevens, and electronic sound by Fred Cohen, is one of the most honored Holocaust-related presentations that has ever been presented to the public. It has been performed in more than 80 cities nationwide and produced for television by PBS affiliate, WAVE.

The piece explores the life and death experience of music performance in concentration camps. Drawing upon survivor accounts, including that of Fania Fenelon, who performed in the Women’s Orchestra at Auschwitz, “An Evening with Madame F” was commissioned for Yom Hashoah in 1989 by the Richmond Jewish Federation.

Stevens is a musician, actor, and playwright. Her unique musical and dramatic performances, original works for the stage, and appearances on television and radio have earned her a significant place in the emerging field of interdisciplinary art.

She studied piano with Leonard Shure, Leon Fleischer, and Arie Vardi, and composition with David Del Tredici and Andrew Imbrie. She holds degrees in music history and performance from Vassar College, the University of California at Berkeley, and from Boston University. In her career as a piano soloist, she has performed the music of Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, and Elliott Carter at Carnegie Recital Hall, Jordan Hall, and the National Gallery. She has performed more than 30 world premieres, including work by Virgil Thompson. Also a scholar of the music of Robert Schumann, she has been published in *Musical Quarterly* and has recorded for *Perspectives of New Music*. Stevens is on the faculty of the College of William and Mary.



May 3 • Wednesday

3:00 - 4:00 PM

Introductions

Professor of English Jane Lunin Perel

“Translating the Holocaust Poetry of Rivka Miriam”

A poetry reading and talk by poet and writer Linda Zisquit
Feinstein Center Function Room, 4th Floor

Linda Zisquit will speak from a poet’s perspective about her translations of Rivka Miriam—a well-respected female Israeli poet, who has written extensively about the Holocaust.

7:30 - 8:30 PM

“Perspectives on Holocaust Literature: Contemporary Poetry and Fiction in Israel and America”

A lecture by poet and writer Linda Zisquit, Lecturer in Literature
at the Rothberg School at Hebrew University in Jerusalem
Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

Linda Zisquit—a poet, a translator, and a writer—will weave together her own poetry into an overview of the *effect* and *affect* of the Holocaust on the poetry and fiction of Israeli and American writers.

Zisquit’s translations of the poems of Yona Wallach, *Wild Light*, earned her a nomination for the PEN translation award. She has published two books of her own poems: *Ritual Bath* (Broken Moon Press, 1993) and *Unopened Letters* (Sheep Meadow Press, 1996). Graham Christian, writing for *The Harvard Review*, declares that Zisquit’s poetry is “the expression of the clash of a modern women’s awareness with the asperities of Israel’s history and rabbinic prescriptions. . . .”

Zisquit’s poems, translations, and essays have appeared in *The Harvard Review*, *The Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Stand* (UK). Her poems have been included in anthologies including *Modern Poems on the Bible* (Jewish Publication Society, 1994), *Modern Poetry in Translation*, Israel Issue (London Press, 1993-4), and *Voices Within the Ark* (Avon, 1980).

A graduate of Tufts University, Zisquit received her master’s degree in teaching from Harvard University and a master’s in humanities from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She lives in Jerusalem with her husband and five children.



May 3 • Wednesday

5:00 - 7:00 PM

“Kindertransport”

by Diane Samuels

A staged reading of this Holocaust play by Providence College students and faculty members. Directed by Associate Professor of Theatre Arts John Garrity.
Blackfriars Theatre, Harkins Hall

This almost-forgotten chapter of Holocaust history, the Kindertransport, is brought to life in English playwright Diane Samuels' drama of the same name. Far from being a dry rehash of history, “Kindertransport” examines the devastating effects of a young girl's separation from her parents, effects that scar her for life and are passed on to her daughter.

The Kindertransport was a heroic effort to remove children of German Jews from the Fatherland. Before Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939—an act which effectively sealed the borders—approximately 10,000 Jewish children were transported out of Germany by train. Although the children's lives were saved, most of them never saw their parents again.

Diane Samuels' play grew out of the stories of friends whose families were ruptured by the Kindertransport. Samuels said she wanted to know: “What future grows out of such a traumatized past?”

The most vivid story in the play is about the evacuation itself. Samuels tells this story through the eyes of Eva Schlesinger, a fictional composite of several surviving children (Kinder) whom Samuels interviewed. Eva was separated from her parents in Hamburg and eventually adopted by Lil Miller in Manchester, England. The play skillfully moves backward and forward in time, presenting Eva first as a terrified nine-year-old about to be packed onto a train for England, and then as Evelyn Miller, a middle-aged Englishwoman who, while wholly assimilated into English life, is brittle and remote. Although Eva survived, her adoptive mother inflicted another type of death on Eva. With Lil's no-nonsense policy of looking only toward the future, she encouraged Eva to fling away her painful past, to discard her true name and the Judaism of her parents. The mature Evelyn has reinvented herself as a British Christian who dismisses Passover as “some Jewish festival.”

Then Evelyn's adult daughter, Faith, discovers a strongbox filled with letters and documents proving Evelyn's secret Jewish origins. This discovery becomes the engine that drives Samuels' play. In Evelyn's refusal to embrace her past, or to let her daughter have access to it, Samuels shows us that there are two types of survival, and that it is possible to lose yourself in the act of preserving yourself.

May 4 • Thursday

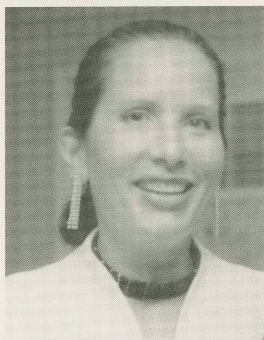
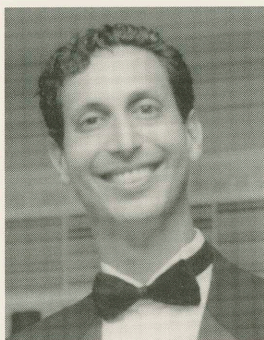
5:30 - 6:30 PM

Introductions

Associate Professor of Art History Dr. Deborah Johnson

“Through My Mother’s Eyes”

A dramatic reading by Rabbi Michael Z. Cahana and vocal performance by Cantor Ida Rae Cahana
Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery and Garden



This is the debut performance in Rhode Island of “Through My Mother’s Eyes,” a dramatic reading by Rabbi Michael Cahana with vocal music performed by Cantor Ida Rae Cahana. The performance piece was a project prepared by the Cahanas for Hebrew Union College. The words are autobiographical passages written by Alice Lok Cahana and interspersed with music that is authentic to the time.

Michael Z. Cahana is Associate Rabbi and Director of Education at Temple Beth El in Providence. After receiving his B.A. cum laude in theater from the University of Houston, he spent several years as an actor, director, and lighting designer. He returned to school to study architectural lighting at the Parsons School of Design, earning the world’s first master’s degree of fine arts in this field. Michael then entered rabbinic school. After ordination in 1994, Rabbi Cahana served as director of Judaic programming at the Jewish Community Center of Toledo; rabbi to Temple B’nai Israel in Kalamazoo, Michigan; and administrator for the Toledo branch of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School. In addition to his rabbinical duties, he has lectured widely, in particular on the themes of Jewish medical ethics and Jewish philosophy. He maintains his artistic connection to the theatre through lighting design and dramatic readings.

Ida Rae Cahana is Cantor at Temple Beth El in Providence and a member of the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. She received a bachelor’s degree in fine arts in voice from Carnegie Mellon University and a master’s degree in music from the New England Conservatory of Music. Ida Rae Cahana was invested as a cantor and received her master’s degree in sacred music from Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in 1993.

She recently received a grant to sing in the International American Institute for Musical Studies program in Graz, Austria. She also has appeared on Broadway at Town Hall and in concert at Mercian Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and at the 92nd Street Y. She is a soprano soloist on Transcontinental Music’s five-CD set of High Holiday music, *Yamin Noraim* and will be featured on another recording of Yiddish and Hebrew art songs to be released next year.

May 4 • Thursday

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Introductions

Associate Professor of Art History Dr. Deborah Johnson

Exhibition Opening

**“Alice Lok Cahana:
Mirrors and Memories, Images of the Holocaust”**

Artist Appearance and Gallery Talk with Alice Lok Cahana
Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery

In 1944, 15-year-old Alice Lok (Cahana) and her entire family were transported by the Nazis from their home in Sarvar, Hungary to Auschwitz. Other than Alice, only her father survived, helped out of Hungary by the humanitarian efforts of Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg. At Auschwitz, Alice and her beloved sister Edith lost contact with each other two days before liberation.

Both the loss of her sister and the heroism of Wallenberg became themes in her art, one reflecting separation and uncertainty, the other reminding her audience of the bravery of men like Wallenberg, who risked everything to save Jewish lives.

After settling in Houston in 1959, Cahana enrolled in courses at the University of Houston and at Rice University and began painting. Her early work was greatly influenced by the color abstraction of Morris Louis. However in 1978, she had an experience that would change the nature of her art forever. That year, she returned to her old neighborhood in Sarvar, Hungary. There she found former neighbors living in her family home and running the Lok family factory as if they had always owned it. More disturbing, she found little evidence of the Jewish community that had lived in Sarvar since the tenth century. Her experience of erasure—together with propaganda that questioned the very reality of the Holocaust—convinced her to start making art about the Holocaust.

Cahana’s work has been exhibited throughout the United States, and she has received a commendation from the United States Congress. In 1999, her experiences at Auschwitz were documented by Steven Spielberg in the Academy-Award winning film, *The Last Days*.

The Providence College exhibition, curated by Professor Deborah Johnson and students in her museum studies class, is of Cahana’s works from 1978 to 2000. These include her earliest pieces on the subject of the Holocaust, selections from her well-known series on humanitarian, Raoul Wallenberg, as well as works on the children of the “model” concentration camp, Theresienstadt. Her most recent work, a sculptural series of painted and collaged scrolls, is both a recollection of Hitler’s desecration of Jewish holy objects and a metaphor for the power of Jewish faith and tradition to sustain such an assault.



May 4 • Thursday

7:30 PM

Introductions

Associate Professor of Art History Dr. Joan R. Branham

Closing Reception

The Bresler Klezmer Band
Hunt-Cavanagh Garden

The Music

Klezmer music is the laughing, crying, wailing, heartfelt instrumental music of Eastern European Jewish life. Sometimes erroneously described as “Jewish Jazz,” it is essentially ethnic functional music, each musical form being connected to one part or another of the traditional Jewish wedding. Having developed over many centuries, it incorporates influences from synagogue chant and from Rumanian, Hungarian, Slavic, and Middle Eastern music.



The Band

The Bresler Ensemble has become known over nearly two decades for its passionate, sensitive playing. As Bresler says, “This is spiritual music—you have to play it from your *kishkes* (innards) and from your heart.”

Fishel (Mike) Bresler, on clarinet, flute, and mandolin, has studied klezmer music with the grand master of the style, Andy Statman. He currently uses therapeutic music to help multiple handicapped children and teaches at The Music School, Wheeler School, and The Learning Connection, all in Providence.

Keyboardist Shelley Katsch, MSW, is a certified music therapist and social worker on the staff of Jewish Family Service.

Trombonist Dave Harris was a founding member of The Klezmer Conservatory Band and currently plays in several klezmer bands.

Percussionist Bob Weiner has played and toured with Harry Belafonte, Herbie Mann, and many other well-known musicians.

May 1-27

Photographic Exhibit “A Priest Vows Never to Forget”

The Edward P. Doyle, O.P. Collection of Liberation Photographs
of Nordhausen Concentration Camp (April 12, 1945)
The Phillips Memorial Library

Rev. Edward Doyle, O.P. donated his personal papers pertaining to the Nordhausen Concentration Camp to the Providence Archives and Special Collections in 1996 because he wanted them to be used to educate the Providence College community and to bear witness to the Shoah, so that history would never repeat itself.

Father Doyle entered Nordhausen as an Army Chaplain in the U.S. Timberwolves, 104 Infantry Division, which liberated the camp on April 12, 1945. What he saw profoundly overwhelmed him, but he had the presence of mind to photograph the rows and piles of ravaged corpses. He kept these photos in a gold and black Ambassador Candy box for fifty years. A year before his death in 1996, he shared them—along with other papers and materials—with Professor Jane Lunin Perel of the Providence College English Department.

His charge to her was that these photographs and the rest of his documents become available to the Providence College community “in order to keep alive the knowledge that this Hell on Earth happened.” College Archivist Jane Jackson received and sorted the materials, assisted by Timothy Finucane, a University of Rhode Island graduate student of library science.

Providence College is proud of Father Doyle, its Dominican “liberator,” and has displayed materials from the Rev. Edward Doyle, O.P. Collection each year to coincide with the global Yom Hashoah commemoration. The materials are also used by Providence College faculty and students in their attempts to begin to fathom the Holocaust, its history, and its halting legacy.

The Committee for *Yom Hashoah 2000: An Arts Commemoration of the Holocaust*, wishes to thank College President Rev. Philip A. Smith, O.P. and Executive Vice President Rev. Terence Keegan, O.P. for their advice in housing and displaying this collection, and College Archivist Jane Jackson for her wisdom and care in its handling.

